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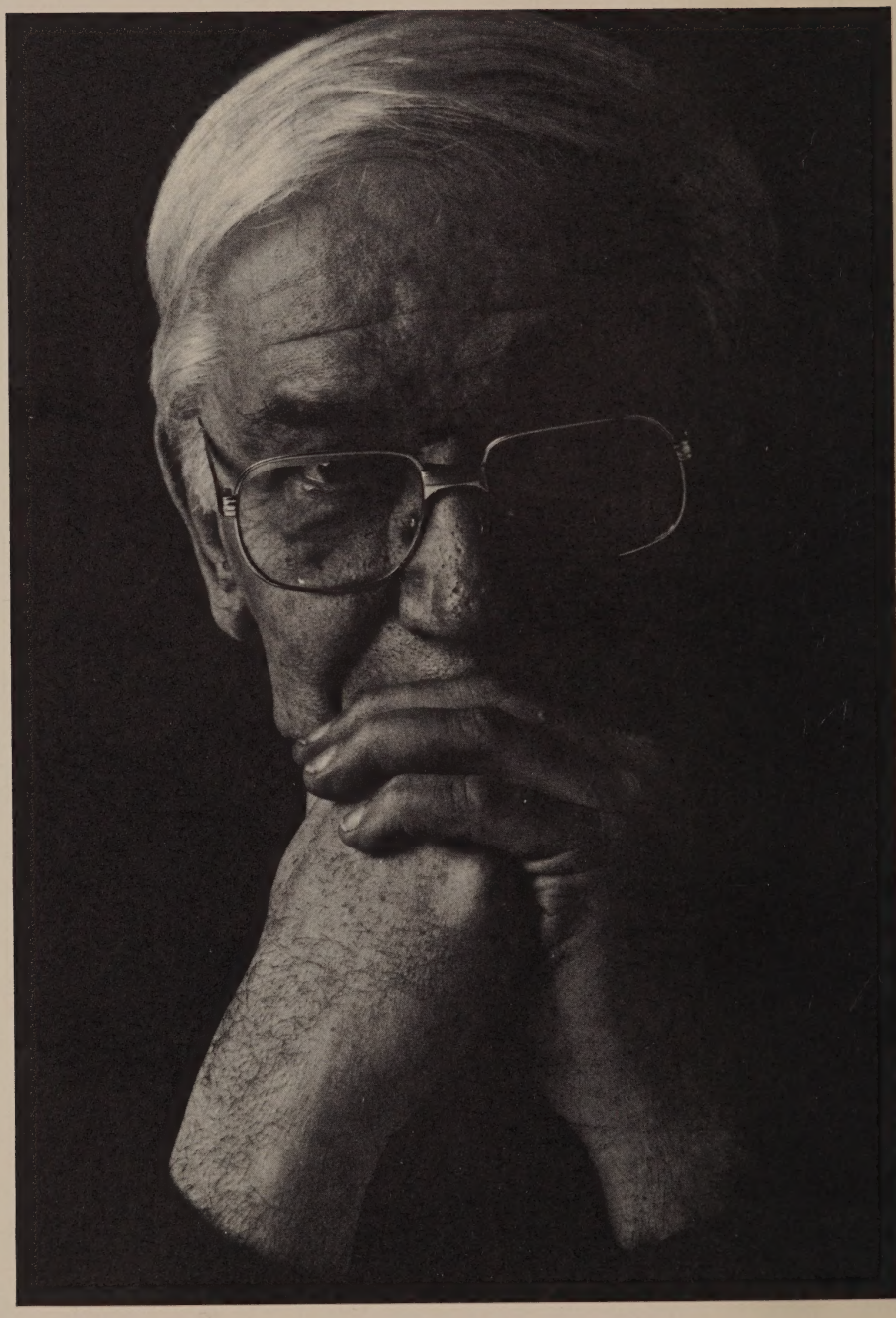
A Paul Griffith Reader



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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

VOLUME 34 / NUMBER 12 / DECEMBER 1983

A PAUL GRIFFITH READER

A devotional work consisting of thirty Paul Griffith editorials written over the years for Fellowship in Prayer (starts page 7),

A biographical memoir by Charles Blackburn (starts page 2),

Memorial poems by Emily Councilman, Elizabeth Anne Socolow, and Nixeon Civille Handy (pages 24 and 25),

And two photographs by Tom Dunham (inside front and rear covers).

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PAUL GRIFFITH
1921 - 1983
IN MEMORIAM

by CHARLES BLACKBURN

ON SATURDAY, April 23 of this year, at approximately 3:30 in the afternoon, Paul Griffith fell from the chair in which he had been sitting while reading. Despite the vigorous efforts of a paramedic team to revive him, he was shortly thereafter declared dead as a result of cardiac arrest arising from arteriosclerotic heart disease, from which he had suffered for ten years. He was sixty-one years, four months, and twelve days of age.

There is a gentle irony that his death should be caused by a coronary complication while his life was so enriched by a heart condition of another sort.

In her poem, "Renascence," Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote:

> The world stands out on either side
> No wider than the heart is wide.
> Above the earth is stretched the sky
> No higher than the soul is high.

During his life Paul Griffith made daily efforts to expand the horizons of his heart and to extend the altitude of his soul. As life experiences were *there*, he made himself available to them and therefore vulnerable to them. Just as there were wonders too awesome to speak of, so too were there hurts. But with the intelligence of a deeply thoughtful person and the perception of a gifted writer, he was able to place emotions in perspective and to know that the high plateaus are recognized only after having passed through the valleys. He wasted nothing and nothing was wasted on him. Achievement meant little to him, accomplishment a great deal.

Paul Harvey Griffith was born at Huntington, Pennsylvania, on December 11, 1921, the first child of Stella McQuain and George C. Griffith. A brother, George, was born when Paul was two years old and soon after the family moved to Philadelphia. Paul's father, a physician there, began medical practice as a diagnostician, becoming in later years a well-known cardiologist. In 1929, with improvements in the family's fortunes, there was yet another move to Merion, Pennsylvania, on Philadelphia's Main Line. The relocation was marred by the separation of Paul's parents, followed within a year by their divorce. This event was particularly upsetting to eight-year-old Paul. Dr. Griffith eventually moved to Southern California where he practiced medicine until his death in 1975. Stella Griffith, later Mrs. Malvin Wallace, remained in Merion until her death in 1972.

Paul attended Friends Central School in Merion and displayed his talents for scholarship and the fine arts from the beginning of his enrollment. He was the recipient of prizes for scholastic achievement, including a medal for "Sterling Character," and he participated in many extracurricular activities. A regular contributor to the school newspaper, he became its editor in his senior year. During his last two high-school years he won a working scholarship as a student aide to Hobson Pitman, an artist well known in the Philadelphia area. Paul's interests in all of the arts intensified during these years and he regularly attended musical and theatrical events and visited art museums and galleries both in Philadelphia and New York. His life-long admiration of great singers began during this time. Although not possessing a strong talent for singing, he was a student of the piano for over ten years and displayed musical ability sufficient to win several medals in city-wide competitions. Also, and significantly, in the mid-1930's he began his extensive and comprehensive collections of books and records.

In the spring of 1939 Paul was graduated with honors from Friends Central School and in the fall of that year entered Yale University. A shyness, at times acute, clouded his years at Yale. He rarely spoke of that time with affectionate memory and did not maintain contact with other members of his class following graduation. His lack of aggressiveness did not, however, cause him to withdraw — physically or emotionally. He was a writer for the *Yale Lit* during his four years at the university and in 1942 became the editor. Griffith won the Curtiss Prize for Creative Writing; was elected to the Elizabethan Club; and in the spring of 1943 was graduated "With Highest Honors in English."

During the years at Yale, Paul solidified his determination to become a writer. From that time until his death few days passed without the practice in some fashion of his chosen work. He wrote novels, short stories, plays; kept journals, diaries, and notebooks. Griffith's editorials are well known to readers of Fellowship in Prayer's magazine. In yet another literary area he wrote criticisms for Philadelphia and New York newspapers. A critical evaluation of Anais Nin's novel *Cities of the Interior* was called by Miss Nin the best appraisal of her work ever done.

In the fall of 1943 Griffith, who was rejected for military service

because of a neuro-gastric disorder, moved to New York to write — and to look for a job to support that career. His first interview resulted in employment. The bright young man from Yale with impressive scholastic credentials became a researcher and writer for *Life* magazine. Through acquaintances on the staff of *Life*, Paul met other writers in the city and became part of a group of then struggling artists surrounding George Davis, fiction editor of *Mademoiselle* magazine. Mr. Davis created an opportunity in his home for writers, artists, and musicians to gather in an American version of a *salon*. It was on these occasions that Paul met such then unknowns as Gore Vidal, Marguerite Young, Carson McCullers, and Ned Rorem. The stimulation of working and writing in a challenging environment was rewarded by the publication in *Mademoiselle* in 1946 of Griffith's short story "A Horse Called September." The piece was selected for inclusion in the Martha Foley collection of *The Best Short Stories of 1946.*

Three years on *Life*, the end of World War II, the publication and success of his short story, and Paul decided to seek an academic atmosphere that would stimulate him to work in a more disciplined manner on a novel. From 1947 to 1949 he taught at the Writer's Workshop of the State University of Iowa. It was there that he did the major part of the writing of his first novel, *The Mare's Nest.* In 1949 he married Ethel Moore, then a student in the art department of the university.

With the completion of the manuscript of *The Mare's Nest* and its acceptance for publication by MacMillan and Company at the end of 1949, Paul and his wife made the decision to move to Philadelphia: he to write, she to paint. To support their careers Griffith found a position as art director of *Presbyterian Life*, a publication of the United Presbyterian Church. During the following decade, 1950-1960, Paul was awarded three fellowships in creative writing at Yaddo, the artists' colony at Saratoga Springs, New York. During these ten years he produced three novels, the last of which, *Square*, was published in serial form in a New York newspaper.

In 1963 the Griffiths moved to New York to be nearer the centers of the publishing and art worlds. Paul became photo editor of Religious News Service, the journalistic branch of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Differences in careers and ambitions between Paul and his painter-wife resulted that year in the dissolution of their marriage; there were no children.

1966 marked the beginning of the last third and most critical phase of Paul Griffith's life. He became the Editor of Fellowship in Prayer's publication and later served also as its Executive Director, working with Miss Kathryn G. Brown, then the Executive Secretary. Although sieges of poor health following a heart attack in 1973 caused him to give up the title of Executive Director of Fellowship in Prayer, he not only remained as Editor, but also became Corporate Secretary, and, by the time of his death, Acting Executive Secretary. *My Stillness,* Paul's last published novel, was printed in 1972 by Vanguard Press, New York. A semi-autobiographical work, the *New*

York Times Book Review called the novel "luminous, jewel-like, and revealing."

To observe Paul Griffith at the work of writing — by his life's end a discipline of approximately four hours a day — was to see him approach the work timidly, even hesitantly. He would spend a few minutes reviewing the previous day's effort, returning the pages to a folder where they were neatly assembled, the corners meticulously aligned. A fresh sheet of paper was then rolled into the typewriter and the creative effort began. The clicking of the keys, slow and erratic at first, became, as he entered the comfort and security of a world of his own devising, more and more rapid and more and more rhythmical: word music. "I wrote like Bach this morning," he would say, "fast and furious."

The concentration with which he wrote caused a physical transformation in his face: lines of tension, anxiety, and even of age, appeared to disappear and the observer could say with certainty that there was a man wholly happy in his work.

These then are the statistics of Paul Griffith's life, with indications of where he was at given times, an outline of his interests, and some of the results of his working career. But the question, "Who was he?" looms large over this biographical skeleton. A tall man, just over six feet, Paul was known and is remembered for his wide and ready smile, his rich and frequent laughter. He walked with a brisk and springy step as if he were the physical manifestation of the title of his column in the Friends Central newspaper: *Carpe Diem!* (Sieze the day!). A phrase heard over and over following his death was "he was the kindest man I ever knew." And this kindness was extended by a firm and hearty handshake, generous encouragement to those suffering disappointments, and verbal appreciation for any favor, no matter how trivial.

"That's wonderful!" was a sentence he often spoke. While conservative in the number of its words, this utterance was supported with a tone of awe, gratitude, enlightenment, delight, or approval. And one recognized the whole-heartedness of it. His consideration embraced all things of life. While he liked flowers in his home, he preferred blooming potted plants to those severed from the parent. He did indeed brake for animals, and even more, would sound his horn at a bird perched on a road on which he was driving. "I couldn't stand it if I killed one," he would say.

Should it be thought that Paul Griffith was simply an overly sensitive, happy-go-lucky, and ever-smiling person, there was, conversely, until his last few years, a man with a dark and brooding melancholy. An uneasy relationship with his father (illuminated in the novel *My Stillness*), a more unsettling one with his stepfather, and an underlying sense of inadequacy led Paul to be beset by insecurities, self-doubt, and feelings of rejection from a very early age. He could be acutely shy, was not aggressive, and, embracing both qualities, was extremely modest. Feelings of "not fitting in" were turned inward and were terrors that he battled for many years.

In 1971 he asked for the assistance and counsel of a well-known self-help group. As he saw that it was possible to find peace and purpose there, he slowly yet steadily began to surrender the anxieties and to replace them with feelings of worth and self-esteem. Although the efforts extended over a period of years, he realized that he was growing spiritually and with this growth came a sense of place and possibility. His work with Fellowship in Prayer, always efficient, began to take on new dimensions as he rededicated himself to learning more of the inestimable value of a great Faith achieved through the power and practice of prayer and to sharing his enlightenments with his customary quiet joy through the pages of the publication.

Because Paul radiated warmth, goodness, and a sense of well-being gained by prayer that daily reaffirmed his belief in the awesome workings of a kind and loving God, he was sought out by many persons for counsel. It is typical of him that he was always available, always optimistic, and always grateful. "They think I'm giving them help, but I'm getting the benefit."

In his personal life, Paul was thrilled by excellence: in his home, in his friends, and in his pleasures. His books and record collections begun those long years ago at Friends Central School grew both in numbers and in knowledgeable acquisitions. Not only did he possess the albums and volumes, he knew their contents as old and good friends. It is telling that as he suffered his fatal heart attack he was reading a new biography of the famous tenor, Enrico Caruso. A habit, unbroken from his youth, was that of attending the theatre, opera, ballet, concerts, and art museums and galleries. When asked about the performances or exhibitions, he would inevitably say, "It was wonderful." And, in truth, to him it was full of wonder.

Following his death on April 23, the weather, which had been near-perfect for his last day, changed and it began to rain: slowly, steadily for three days. The atmosphere seemed to be agreeingly appropriate for his loss. But then, on Thursday, April 28, the day of his burial, as if in celebration of his life the sun rose in a sweet and kind and gentle sky. Flowering trees and shrubs, barely buds during the rain, burst forth fully opened and the day was clear and calm and radiant with sights he loved. On approaching the churchyard of the Friends Meeting House near Princeton, those who gathered to be with Paul Griffith on his last journey were struck by the beauty of a burial ground almost completely carpeted with the shy blooms of wild violets. The day was the man. The sorrowful occasion was tempered and made meaningful by the resplendent vision of new life.

Paul Griffith's work remains. His thoughtful editorials for the Fellowship in Prayer publication have brought inspiration, enlightenment, and comfort to the readers. His novels — those published and those not — offer penetrating insights into the human experience and are testaments to the possibility of survival. Along with the physical evidence of his work, there is inevitably, for those who knew him personally, the memory of a fine, kind, loving, and dedicated man who lifted our hearts. "It was wonderful."

A PAUL GRIFFITH READER

Letting Go and Letting God

OUR WAY of life sets a gold-embossed premium on people of twenty-four-karat individuality. A person today is esteemed in proportion to his or her development of all that is unique — that is, peculiarly his own — in his nature. The result is a national pantheon of current gods and goddesses, athletes and movie stars, politicians and generals, philosophers and criminals, artists and people of mere money or kinks of character or dress, who grow more and more prominent to the degree that they supply good copy for the news media. Under the lenses of cameras, in front of microphones, the criterion for prominence is a human being's colorfulness. Looks acquire the same value as character, the sensational the same importance as the solid and enduring. Men and women become great according to their ability to do vaudeville turns for the press. Thus Robert Frost seems to have been the only great poet in a period when half a dozen men lived who were his equal or superior; and for the same reasons Frank Lloyd Wright the only architect; and Hemingway the only true writer of fiction. The superficiality and inaccuracy of such judgments are now apparent, and we can only plead pleasure in the well-rehearsed stunts of these men in service to their genuine individualities. Yet, while we make mistakes about them, we continue to cherish our great men and women. They are important to us no doubt because they fulfill our secret longings for ourselves. They convince us of our conviction that each of us harbors a divine spark which is our particular and crucial share in God's purposes for this world.

There are reasons why most of us have not become Robert Frost in the public mind, or Margaret Mead. A thousand daily obligations deter us from being ourselves to such a single-minded pitch. Doing what we have to, we are turned into blurs in the rush-hours of the increasingly crowded cityscape. Nor,

to be honest, do we possess the talents with which to focus our individualities into such eye-catching flames.

Nevertheless, in our blurry, probably too humble ways, we quietly if not secretly insist upon our essential individualities. I may not be somebody by your standards, but according to mine I am really something special: notice how kind I am, how punctual and how thoughtful and how my hands tremble from the strain of containing my modesty . . . . So our minds run. Our little egotisms are maybe necessary to the defense of selves otherwise lost in the shuffle of commuter or shoppers at the A & P . . . . Monday I will do the wash, Tuesday the baking and the banking, Wednesday the housecleaning, and Thursday I shall wash my hair and rest and cultivate my mind by playing the new album from the Longines Symphonette. Friday I shall prepare my matchless bean casserole for the supper at church. Saturday I shall be the perfect wife to my weary husband. On Sunday I shall attend both the morning service and vespers. I am not famous, but in my plain and ordinary style I am obviously remarkable, probably the most remarkable of all. As we go about starring in our own daily serials in the living color of our minds, our egos are relentless. "I am" and "I shall" are both program and commercials. Our individualities may go unreported and unphotographed but we tend them as continually, with such fierce fuss, as though they were indeed sparks of the divine within.

Now, it may be that even the lowliest and least noticeable individuality amounts to a gift from God. Certainly ours is a harmless way of life despite its narrowness and selfishness. It provides us, above all, with the heady idea that we sit in the driver's seat over our own lives.

But then, life being life, something goes wrong — something that does not fit in with our notions of our importance, our fate, our just desserts. Our children fall sick. Or we lose our property or money. Or someone else is handed the position in our office, with the raise in pay, that is rightfully ours. Our partner-in-life cannot hide his or her chagrin, disappointment, anger. Out of wounded pride we take to concealing ourselves at home. Our heads go around with the same bitter useless thoughts. We are outraged. To make ourselves feel better, we eat too much or drink too much or swallow more tranquilizers than the doctor intended. We curse our fate and God for bringing it about. We are too good, too fine, and too special to deserve such treatment. We are so furious that we will avenge ourselves on God by ruining ourselves. And so we bring down our lives and those of everyone around us because of our furies and our self-pity and our outrage . . . .

We are so carefully bred to the ideal of being individuals equal to all crises, strong enough to survive and bright enough to outwit any mortal catastrophe, that we are unable to let go. If only I could do this . . . or that . . . .We keep up our defiance, blaming and condemning God even as we go under. As the last wave closes over, our fists are being shaken at heaven.

Actually, to go under is as respectable as to survive. To fail is as rich and full a fate as to succeed. What is hardest is learning to be able to say to God in all calm and acceptance, "Not my will but Thine."

To let God do His will is, of course, a most presumptuous presumption. Yet it appears to be natural to the vanity of men, and the letting is accomplished only as a result of the most awful tragedy, the deepest loneliness, the most terrible despair.

Many or us have been unlucky enough to sustain the illusion over many years that we create our destinies, forge our own happy endings. We are in for a hard time. Others — clearly more fortunate — learned early and forever the simple sanity of letting go and letting God.

Comment on the Spiritual Life

THE LANGUAGE we have to use to express ourselves about spiritual matters is an obstacle to them, it always seemed to me. This may be because I first grew familiar with the language, which is full of cliches and very glib, on the tongues of sanctimonious relatives whom I disliked and thought I could see through even as a child. Maybe I associate this langauge, as it was used by these sanctimonious people, with the ugly and comfortless churches and Sunday schools to which I was dragged regularly. Whatever the reason, it has taken me at least half a lifetime to be able to utter the word "spiritual" with any degree of poise; and the word "God" I still shy away from, though this could be merely an appropriate lack of presumption.

A human being needs just about half a lifetime to see the desirability of the spiritual in his life. Particularly in this country, we are subjected to such pressures that a lot of time has to pass before we can pause and look around and notice what's what. Until we do pause, we are likely to dismiss the spiritually minded as "old ladies" or worse — as individuals out of the swim of all the activity that counts. If we like to believe we are "with it," we are not attracted by those who are "out of it" whether it is because they are wise or modest or shy or philosophical or serene. It's very easy to equate the spiritual with the boring and the defeated, the overweight and the gray-haired. And once we do this, there is little or no problem about sealing up our senses against spiritual things.

But more than time is necessary for the discovery of the spiritual, obviously, or we would be living in a world where everybody over fifty is a saint. Upbringing — religious education of the young — apparently is effective only in the long run, coming into forceful operation along with the middle-aged crisis. Only a few of us have been so gifted by God that we possess from the start unshakable faith and confidence in Him that cannot be spoiled by anything in life.

My own experience — and the experience of the people I know best — has been that spirituality has come into my life only as a result of my needing it, of

my realizing the void that is there when it isn't, and of my learning the hard way when the spiritual has been ignored, evaded, betrayed, and lost. The hard way is the human way, unfortunately.

I bring in these personal details solely because they provide me with the vocabulary and some figures of speech to say what I mean . . . . What I mean is that, knowing the dingy colors of a day when the spirit is not operating, I have been able to discern — to begin to discern — the colors of a day when the spirit is. There are numberless details, including some physical ones of the most intimate nature that we ought to be taught at some time in our lives, that we should be able to find written down somewhere. It's amazing that we are so uneducated in these critical matters and that we have so blunted our natural-born abilities to recognize what a friend of mine calls "the gentle (or not so gentle) nudge, often felt through illness, which touches us in the area of one or more of the 'earthly' senses."

One thing is clear about the next step. It is not something we do ourselves. It is not reached by hard work or great conscientiousness or sincere intention or profound ambition or pressing need, though need must have something to do with it. All we can do — you, I suspect, as well as I — is prepare ourselves so that something can happen. This is particularly difficult for Americans. We are brought up in the belief that the best things in life are gained by our own efforts, the more furious the efforts the more glittering our rewards. The idea of getting ready to do nothing sounds spooky, wrong, foreign, practically un-American.

Other people have more confidence about this idea than I. For me it is like entering a body of water with the promise that I won't move a muscle. Such passivity requires of me a bravery and above all a faith that I am not certain I have. It's like allowing myself to be rendered unconscious by the anesthetist's hypodermic needle: I don't like anything about it.

Here, by the way, is another instance of the inadequacy of our language, at least as we use it. All my life I have heard talk of people "leading spiritual lives." The first thing that becomes clear to me, once I have investigated the possibility for myself, is that it is the spirit, not I, who is going to do all the leading.

For "something" does "happen." All this preparation and hullaballoo about getting oneself ready is not useless. But in order to give an accurate account of "what" happens we are going to have to struggle not only with language again but with the uneducated state of our senses, which have not been trained since childhood to perceive such happenings or to know what to make of them once they have come into human consciousness. I am aware, for instance, that when the spirit is leading me I enjoy a remarkable sensation of well-being which I can recognize as easily as other states of bliss after, say, a good dinner or a happy day in the country. But the word "well-being" does not express the feeling thoroughly, not only because it fails to distinguish itself from these other states but because it ought to contain some indication of the feeling of safety that is part of it, as well as something more that would include the childlike trustingness that, for all my lack of confidence, is still another

part of it for me. To try to be clearer, I can say that I feel as if the universe and I were identical, but when I say this I run afoul of words once more, because it's a cliche to say this and on account of this you don't believe my words and dismiss them without a second thought. And if, still trying, I say I feel as though I were both the rider and the horse, I err in the opposite direction and you don't believe me because my words are too fancy and, besides, nobody knows anything about horses or riding them nowadays and the comparison is meaningless.

Maybe the best way of expressing myself, after all, is to make a flat statement. In my very recent experience, I have found that the spirit does exist and that it will lead my life once I have made the decision that I want it to and I am willing to wait for God to make it move through me.

Rebelling against the Spirit

IT IS a well-known and usually forgivable human trait — a person's believing that his answers to the questions of life and eternity and God ought to be everybody else's too. At its worst this impulse becomes fanaticism. Ordinarily it is nothing but a harmlessly egocentric yet fundamentally generous desire to save the world the pains we ourselves have had to endure while on our various ways to our answers. Look, the impulse seems to say, this is what I have come up with, it works for me, how foolish of you not to try it yourself.

And there is the opposite attitude. This is the feeling, also common, that my answer is mine and only mine and I am going to stick to it even if yours works better or so you say. Stick to mine, so uniquely of my own manufacture, I shall — even though it may not be perfect, has in fact some bugs in it, and, frankly, leaves me with a couple of thousand unanswered questions.

The second attitude is the one I am prone to. Lately, with the help of friends, I have come to see that questioning is my preferred and habitual way of living mentally and emotionally and even spiritually. It is natural for me — if it isn't natural, it sure has been drilled into me by my folks, teachers, and all other purveyors of the laws of our land. But suddenly I see that it has become a trick of the mind that I have developed in order not to let go, in order (as long as I can keep it up) not to let God.

There are those special God-blessed individuals who appear to have been born with special aptitude for the spiritual life — Dostoevski reflected the attitude of the world toward such people when he called his Prince Mishkin "the idiot." But most of us are not specially blessed, and we are obliged to learn to want the spiritual life for ourselves, each of us at his own time and at his own pace.

Learning to want the spiritual life does not, in most of us, mean that we

undergo some dramatic or drastic episode on the road to Damascus. On the contrary, it seems to be a process as slow and mostly unnoticeable as the erosion of the earth and its hills and rocks. Then suddenly enough erosion has taken place for it to be visible — from a certain angle, that is, and momentarily. When the moment is over and we have regained a more normal position in our lives, the vision is gone. But the memory lasts. It does not linger on, as love is popularly supposed to. I can feel it radiating inside. It is like a hunger that requires satisfaction.

What I am taking note of is the discouraging fact that once I have lapsed back into a routine angle of vision I have to repeat the cycle of irritation, exasperation, weariness, and fatigue that led somehow to my first glimpse of the spiritual life. I am not immune to the depressions and despairs of others who are part of my daily life. I cannot keep myself from reacting to the general crossness of the people I have known for years. And, although I am discovering that when the day is over I am able, with privacy and reflection, to relocate that certain angle from which I first saw the spiritual life, I am rebelling against the apparent necessity of going through the preliminary erosion again and again and again. True, my confidence in being able to return to that precious angle of vision is a boon, wonderful just in its unexpectedness. But a revelation a day or a revelation per week is not in itself a satisfaction for the hunger I am aware of. A revelation, it seems to me, is only a first step — a miraculous peek at what lies ahead.

Why I stay at the first step, I am not sure. It could possibly be a simple craving for revelation, for the exotic taste of it. I might, like my cats, feel that if one can of tuna is good, two are twice as good. I suspect, though, it is plain laziness. . . . It is becoming clear to me that if a second step is ever going to be taken I am the one who will have to take it — by my will, my efforts, my strength. The one thing I have learned by the age of fifty is that as long as there is life there is obviously going to be the need of exertion on my part. I used to think that when St. Paul urges us to pray without ceasing he was being a zealot. I think now that he was merely stating the facts. How I am going to achieve this monumental task at the same time that I "let go," I am sure I don't know. I have arrived at a paradox. Or a riddle.

It occurs to me that something has to give if I am going to solve this situation. I see that the only element in it that will give is myself. So I inspect myself to try and find out what can be changed, and I realize that instead of getting up in the driver's seat, which is my characteristic response to any job that I must do, I must finally let go. It always comes back to that.

I have rebelled before at the difficulties of doing this. That kind of passivity (which, naturally, is how I see it) scares the daylights out of me. I ask myself why it does. Why? I guess it is really that I don't have any trust in God. This is irrational of me. Because up until recently I have had no relationship with Him whatsoever, let alone one that could cause a trauma. The fact is I know who He is but I'm not sure He will remember me. The fact is that deep down I expect Him to cut me dead. Why? I am going to have to do some heavy self-analysis to figure this out. . . .

For openers, then, I can see that I am rebelling in more than a single way. I can see, too, that I am rebelling basically because I lack trust, I am afraid. That is as far as I've gotten . . . . Except that, as a result of that first glimpse from that certain angle, I can now imagine myself crossing the street one day and going up to Him and introducing myself loudly and clearly. Providing, of course, I ever find the nerve.

Old Differences, New Likenesses

YOU CAN communicate with others if you let them know you well enough to be able to identify with you. This is a great discovery for me to make. Communicating has always been one of my problems (hence, no doubt, one of my "specialties"). When — for a variety of reasons — I felt able to communicate with literally no one in the world, I not only saw myself as outcast by society but believed that there must be a good reason for this, namely that I was unacceptable for a variety of reasons that society evidently knew though I didn't.

Feeling ostracized, I clammed up. If I was spoken to, I responded with politeness, nothing more. Politeness is impersonal. Anyone, taught correctly, can achieve it. And what you achieve is the same whether you are an ambassador or a truck-driver or a hostess. Politeness takes the place of communication. It substitutes a manner where true feelings are dangerous or difficult or impossible or irrelevant. The word most commonly associated with it is "frigid." It contains no warmth. Except where it is simply necessary, politeness turns people off. Being merely utilitarian, it has none of the colors or shades of colors of personality. It attracts no one but old women hipped on courtesy. It is the natural refuge of the arrogant — those who regard themselves as being so unique that they cannot imagine anyone identifying with them, to start with. These are the people who are always vaingloriously complaining of their isolation. They suffer from spiritual and other kinds of pride and make themselves as miserable as they do their friends, without, however, knowing why.

When, though, you arrive at your comeuppance in this world, when even you know that you must stop pretending to yourself that you are in charge of your own universe at the very least, and you have to teach yourself no matter how belatedly to bow your head and heart and soul and even your knees before a power that is greater than yourself, and you have to permit this power to govern your existence in both the greatest and smallest ways (I don't know which is the more painful), you finally put yourself into perspectives that are really real.

You see who and what you are. And you accept yourself. Once you have done this, you can become yourself without discomfort, you relinquish all the little prides you had been clinging to, you drop the politeness. All the variety of

your actual self — nothing ideal, certainly — begins to sprout and bud and flower and leaf. Others, seeing this display, are able to identify with some part of it, if not with what's beautiful or fragrant then with what is blemished or stunted, even with what is rotten. They understand some part of you. And so they accept and welcome you. Communication has been achieved . . . . Odd, that I seem to have learned somewhere that it was my differences that would constitute myself. I see now that it is actually my likenesses to others.

I mention this fact because to me it has come as an unexpected though precious bonus for my labors in getting ready to have a relationship with God. And even more unexpected and valuable to me have been the acceptance and welcome given me by others. Instead of the competitive enmity through which I habitually saw them I have received interest, encouragement, moral support, intellectual advice, the tales of many spiritual experiences. It's a development I never hoped for.

Some Positive Words for the Negative

ONE characteristic of organized religion that puts me off is the optimism it sells. I am also put off by the glibness of some people's positive thinking — all that whistling in the dark that they say is sunshine.

I can't afford such euphoria. It is when I get the delusion that all is well that I am most in danger of straying and of losing my way forever.

Although I am aware that my faith preaches the good news of the New Testament, and though I have recently begun to enjoy feelings of harmony with not only my fellow creatures but also our mutual Creator, I remain leary of forgetting that it was the negative aspects of my life — and only the negative aspects and all the accompanying anguish and pain — which persuaded me of not just the wisdom but the necessity of my letting go, of letting God, of surrendering and finally of accepting. For my own sake I would not dare to forget the negative things.

The bliss that I am now able to find in my spiritual life would be greatly diminished if not extinguished, I feel certain, if I ever let slip from my memory what it was that first battered me to my knees in an attitude of prayer.

Keeping my memory green is a precaution I always take.

This does not mean that I will not tolerate your perpetual smile, your hopes that never stop springing, your faith so deep it is obviously the real foundation of your being. Nor does it mean, I trust, that you look down on me for having had to achieve your sort of serenity the hard way or for being obliged to hang onto it with a kind of anxiety that isn't at all necessary to you.

It's only human to crave security, to long for everlasting safety, to prefer happy feelings instead of bad ones.

The only people I know who satisfy such cravings, though, are children.

Even at its best, most of us know, life brings the bad feelings; they're inseparable from the good. If you are lucky enough to avoid anger and despair, there are still all the other inevitabilities of existence — I don't need to itemize them. My point is that it is the heartbreaking beauty of the human predicament, so much more deeply colored than mere sunshine, that seems to my taste to be excluded from the optimism I am talking about . . . .

At present I am doing all I am able to do by making my daily effort to find some contact with God even though I am surrounded by the baffling chiaroscuro of life. Its lights and darks seem at present to be prerequisites for the presence of any spirituality. Maybe, with time and the development of some spiritual technique, this situation will change for me. It honestly doesn't matter to me if it does change. For now that I have a reasonable certainty of maintaining some contact with God, I am able to endure the darks of my life as well as glory in its lights and hold a certain feeling of empathy for the rest of you who, optimist and pessimist, are riding in the same rocky boat I am.

Fellowship Business

I HAVE said before that in my opinion how an individual arrives at a spiritual life doesn't matter just as long as he or she does arrive eventually. Some of us who have made our arrivals the hard way through disillusion, disappointment, and despair are inclined to look with envy and perhaps a little unspoken doubt in the direction of those who didn't have to arrive at all but evidently have always been there. And those who have had it easy in this respect, seeming to inherit their serenity as they have their blue eyes or sandy hair, are sometimes likely to regard us as barbarians who insist on dragging difficulty and worse into what for them has always been a sure and beautiful experience . . . .

Since the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer has been the bringing together in understanding of people of all faiths in the common act of prayer, comprehension between these two kinds of people ought to be a simple matter. It is the fact that we are all praying together that matters, not whether we have always done it in synagogues, meeting houses, or pews of the Episcopal church, and certainly not whether we started to practice it only a few years ago in dark and lonely rooms with no one to teach us and nothing to go on except the fundamental human instinct to turn our eyes upwards . . . .

When you want to begin to pray, it is perhaps amazing but true that some of us don't know how to start. (We receive letters stating this.) However, if an individual has received some religious training when young, he or she probably knows the rudiments of the act, remembers the prescribed gestures, say, recalls some of the traditional words. After starting, one is on one's own. And here is

where the rest of us often get into trouble. Once a prayer has been offered, what can I expect? Is the sensation of harmony that follows a truly spiritual release? Or is it just the physical relaxation that follows the expression of a tension? (We know a lot about psychology, and use its terminologies familiarly, but we know almost nothing about prayer — and have developed no vocabulary for it.) How, for example, do I know an answer to my prayers? Or something that I imagine is an answer? It is a world explored so far only by a select few whom we regard as saints. Yet it is a world vitally important to me, unsaintly though I am. It can be confusing. And upsetting. And discouraging. If you are like me, raised in the confidence that a person of character can succeed at anything if he or she applied himself to it steadfastly enough, you can be discouraged to the point of deciding I am talentless in that direction too.

The difficulty of our efforts to start praying seems to reside in the notion that a prayer must be a conversation face-to-face with God with me doing all the talking until He is disposed to utter a reply. This idea is enough to unnerve anyone, and in my experience it is a mistake to begin there. Perhaps, I have begun to think, the wise thing is to hold such a conversation in abeyance until I have had the chance to learn the protocol of this kind of communication, the sort of language to use, the proper subjects to bring up . . . until, in short, I can feel easy about it.

Unless you run into an emergency and have to open such communication in a hurry, in which case feeling easy does not matter, what you crave when you set out on a new experience is some sort of guide, some hint as to what it is going to be like. I have found that guides are few and far between. There is the Bible and all the great prayers and great formulators of them, but it has been difficult for me (at least until our trip to the Holy Land this spring) to visualize its saints and philosophers as men something like me in any way. What I seem to be seeking is this identification, and it is accomplished most simply for me by contemporaries, people of today who are able to talk to me in my own language out of a frame of reference that I don't have to study to comprehend. However, contemporary novels, where it is my habit to hunt for experiences that are corroborative of my own, seldom include the spiritual lives of modern men and women, and a fine book such as Douglas Steere's *Dimensions of Prayer* lacks the language to provide me with a conviction of the flesh and blood and muscle and nerve reality of the insights otherwise so intelligently presented. Others feel as I do, I suspect. I don't know how many references to Brother Lawrence have been made to me in letters and manuscripts, and in reading him I have felt that the reason for his popularity has been the recognizable humanness of his character and situation. I get the impression that most of us want contact with people of this sort on a regular real day-to-day basis, and what we want from these contacts is the sharing of our spiritual lives with others at any level, the simplest as well as the most complex. We want — at least I want — not to be alone in our vertiginous conversations with God.

I have been able to locate contacts of this sort among individuals usually of my own age who have shared similar experiences of life and thus talk my language. These are people who have arrived at their spiritual lives the hard

way; our relations often grow into friendships. Friendships with those who have, by this standard, had it easy, have been more problematical, depending on their wisdom and tact but most of all upon my willingness to perceive their qualities, spiritual and otherwise, in spite of the differences of experience and so of understanding and language that used to separate us. However, as my understanding has broadened, I have begun to give up my lifelong criticalness and insistence on my standards — and I find I am beginning (just beginning) to accept anyone who is praying and can share this experience of his or hers, what it's like, what it means, and so forth, with me. I find with relief and gratitude that I am not alone here shivering and shaking on this earth. And with all of these other humans beside and around me I am much more comfortable down on my knees with my eyes turned upward. It would not be too exaggerated to say that I have been able to arrive at my spiritual life by joining the human race, by becoming a member of the fellowship of others. . . .

Nothing seems to me more appropriate to Fellowship in Prayer than this way of experiencing God. It is a way utilized to widespread effect by many groups today, although it also was the way of the early Christians. My feeling is that we have stumbled, or been pushed by the necessity of the times, onto something vitally important to all of us. It seems to be our real business as a fellowship. At any rate, in all my own recent life there has been nothing that offered me so much hope for my own life or that has offered me the sense, excruciatingly important to me, that, mere human that I am with some bad hard experiences behind me, I am able to offer others something conceivably helpful to them.

Human Suffering

I MAY very well be wrong in my impression that people exist who have not had to earn their spiritual lives by means of suffering. It is difficult if not impossible to know enough about a person to be able to make such a judgment on such a matter with any certainty. My impression — which is strong — could easily be nothing but the blindness that customarily accompanies suffering and is indeed one sure symptom of the self-centeredness that seems to be both its cause and its effect.

Suffering is not the style any more. These days, we seem to regard wretchedness of the mind or the emotions or spirit as a disease that we ought not to have caught in the first place, and now that we have it we ought to shut up about it and try to doctor it with either a pill or a placebo or willpower ("which will cure anything if it's strong enough"), and even if it hurts we ought to forget and act as if everything were swell. To know that we are suffer-

ing, however, just to put the word to it, offers dignity to our sufferings, makes us less anxious to apologize for them, helps others to see us as something worthier than another neurotic, fool, or case. To see a human being as a sufferer (and we do suffer excruciatingly from the neuroses we refuse to let go of, and from our foolishness, and from our tedious way of going on and on about this or that) is to offer him or her or oneself the sympathy that we can't work up for a case. All suffering, it seems to me, is the result of our fallibility, our dislike of it, our disgust at it, our despair because of it; and we can never be wholly free of it as long as we are human beings confined to our imperfect skins, characters, and constitutions. All we can do is fight our fallibilities, pray without ceasing, enjoy those days when we are able to be serenely at one with our higher power, and endure as we can the majority of our days when we are back in the coils and moils of our miseries which, it is now clear, we are going to have to fight until our last day on earth.

Now that I am beginning to understand this about my own human nature, I am beginning to understand it about other individuals' human natures, which I don't tolerate or forgive quite as easily. On days that I am occasionally blessed with now, when I enjoy a contentment as real as sunshine or some stillness of my soul which I know as well as I do the fragrance of certain flowers, I have found myself being obliged to notice that these days are not necessarily so balmy for others. I react to this discovery with irritation. A selfish reaction. Once I give some thought to it (for selfishness is one of my fallibilities and just like the rest of them it makes me uncomfortable as if I were obliged to rid myself of it as completely as though it were a splinter in my soul) I am discovering how to cope with it and change it. I extricate myself from that bubble of bliss in which I have been squatting like a connoisseur of all that's finest in the universe; in other words I step out of my self-centeredness, I take a good look at the intruder, and ten times out of ten I see that he has forced himself upon me because he is suffering and cannot endure it any longer without some help. Whereupon I offer him what I would want if I were in his shoes — some interest, first of all, that being an exceedingly rare ointment these days, and then some intelligent understanding, and such practical advice as I have available: in short, whatever help I can muster for his benefit. In doing this for him, I find more happiness than I ever did in my stillness, which amounts at best to safety and escape. This happiness does not have the poetry and beauty of stillness. But it does possess all the hard facts and painful feelings of reality, which is God, and not the least of these facts is my knowledge that when I am unserene and troubled again, perhaps by tonight, certainly by tomorrow, the person whose wretchedness I have been sharing will be there to help me with mine. In my stillness I was alone, but now I am not.

This sharing of strength and need is beginning to be a way of life for me. I seem to have joined a fellowship of friends. It resembles a family — so much so that I am able to comprehend why certain people I knew when I was a boy addressed one another as "Brother" or "Sister." It seemed awfully old-fashioned then, really kind of ridiculous, but now it seems wonderful to me, now that I realize we are all here and we are all suffering together.

Under the Expert Care of Truth

WHEN I was young, the fundamental questions of existence were, to me, as for many youngsters, personal problems of the most excruciating kind. My thoughts on life, death, and God Himself — I suppose I ought really to say, my feelings concerning them — invariably came to me when I was in bed at night. They upset me so that I would sit up and often have to get out of bed and pace and sometimes hold my head with my hands in order to bear and contain my mental panic.

These youthful anxieties, which certainly were as painful as any I have had to endure, seem to be common. Most of my friends, anyhow, went through similar agonies. But I kept most of these terrors up until not so long ago. I am aware that this simply reflects on the fact that no one matures with either much steadiness, completeness or grace (we are in bloom here and tardy if not just plain nipped-in-the-bud elsewhere): and on my own shocking slowness — I am fifty-two now and, in all frankness, I have to admit that only after a great deal of self-examination, thought, and prayer in recent years have I managed to grow to the maturity that one would ordinarily expect of a none-too-promising twenty-year old.

Nonetheless late-blooming does allow one the advantage of full consciousness of what's up. And in the past twelve months (from December to December) I have gone through two experiences which — I am able to see very clearly — have taught me more than the previous twelve, twenty-four, and possibly even thirty-six years.

I speak of these personal experiences for no reason other than to communicate with other human beings, our traditions and trust in amenities having been blown down and cut so completely that I believe we can understand what's up solely on the simplest, most personal level of utterance.

The first of these events was the death a year ago December of my mother. This by an unusual stroke of good fortune was the first experience of death I had had which was close and of undoubted importance to me. No doubt it was the death which mattered more to me than any other I will experience other than my own. I know I had dreaded and feared it from the days when I was a youngster scared of the dark. Yet, when it happened right out of the blue, I found it — to my astonished relief and happiness and even joy — to be a happening that I could accept without any protest whatever. Knowing what I knew of her life, feeling as I felt about her, I was able to gaze at her in her coffin with certainty that she was already receiving her reward. I saw only the bliss of her release. I rejoiced for her. And my feeling ever since has been that she has never been so near to me, so always with me. I cannot analyze this confidence I feel within me, nor hand you a theological explanation or argument in proof thereof: I simply know it.

The second experience that educated me in some of the most elementary and (I suppose) profound aspects of life was my own run-in with serious affliction and the real possibility of death in the December just past. This also was a

first experience for me and, like my neurotic and yet absolutely genuine dread of losing my mother, it was something I had devoted many long nights of thoughts and nerves to. And again to my astonishment and relief I found the actual experience much less frightening than I had ever imagined, although the pain that hit me so unexpectedly was both excruciating and totally different from any pain I had ever felt before. I did not panic at the real thing. And as I lay in the Coronary Care Unit I suffered no fear of further pain and breathlessness and certainly no dread whatever of death. I accepted the truth. And the truth, I discovered, took care of me in return. It seemed to cradle me in its arms and hush me through and through.

I am reporting on these two experiences, so highly important to me, so that you can share some of the confidence they have supplied me. If you are like me, you are interested to hear of what happens to other people even if (also like me) you probably won't learn very much from their reports. But let me assure you that in these two experiences in which every impulse and sensation of my being was equivalent to prayer, I was not only taken care of expertly by the truth, I was freed of fear of any description.

And I am noting this for my own sake as well as yours, since I have also been conscious of the fact that it has only been as I began to get well and started to think again of resuming the duties and pleasures and other aspects of existence that I have already lost some of that perfect trust which I had when nothing existed for me but the truth, which (I see it more and more) is the same as God.

Belated Perceptions about the Spirit

SEVERAL times before this I have lamented the lack of vocabulary which is both adequate to our spiritual experience and accessible to everyone of us — not just to "religious-minded" folk or "big" readers or writers of difficult verse.

Recently, as part of my own meditations, I have been reading the writings of a pair of Quakers of a couple of centuries ago, George Fox and John Woolman, and I have had my eyes opened to the obvious fact that it was the simple vividness and reality of their spiritual adventures which forced each to express himself so well. It was a matter of neither the times, the talent nor the available vocabulary. It was only — how can I have been so unaware? — the force and life of the spirit which created the necessary and striking words.

My complaints about our lack of mutually understood words have been based, I perceive, on my lifelong anxiety to open up and maintain communication with others. This anxiety has been one more example of my evidently con-

genital dimwittedness, for only slowly has the truth started to dawn in my mind that communication has to be a two-way thing — none of us (no matter how we may feel) is a wireless left to beep-beep its message to the continent of Antarctica and other unpopulated places. Communication is not up to me. It is not up to you. It is and always has been a natural collaboration between you and me and everyone else, including God.

What I have not seen until now has been another obvious fact, namely that others have been trying to establish this collaboration with me all the while I was bewailing my separateness and supposed isolation. (This has been one of the surprises and bonuses of writing these editorials — the desire of others to help, to steer, to recommend, to bolster, to befriend.) Through them God has been attempting to speak to me all the while. . . .

That I am now belatedly able to hear these messages and see this fact — and that I am able to respond — has been, I know, the result of my having been able with God's aid to surrender my original extremely deep-set belief that I and my ego were the center of the universe.

From this fortunate surrender of "self" has grown a network of communication — which to me means not only words and intellectual comprehension but gestures and affection and love — that now sustains me. I have observed about myself as well as about others that humans are sustained by God to the extent that they can obliterate their egos and other props of the phony self. They are sustained to the extent that they try to sustain others, to the extent that they devote themselves to others. By "devote" I do not mean any sentimental attachment, highmindedness, or dependence of any sort. I guess I mean scrupulosity of intelligence, diligence of caring, and the rare ability to act upon both at once. I am conscious that I myself (a phrase of which I am thoroughly weary now) find the most meaning, beauty, happiness, joy, call it what you will, when I am farthest away from consciousness of that "self."

I am learning indeed that this "self" which I call "mine" is only a figment of my ambition, my imagination, my inordinately deep-felt terror of not being much, my inordinately based self-centeredness.

What is this self, really? A skin of pretenses, daydreams, lies, and hopes. To others, unable to see through that skin, it must look like something definite. Like, I fancy, somebody. To me, inside the skin, confined within all those warts and blemishes and fancy tattoes of vanity, it is nothing definite at all — a movie that changes every minute, in short, reality. . . .

Like the insides of everybody else, mine is of God. It is God living out His creation.

As soon as I perceive this, I see the necessity of throwing away this atrocious and/or pathetic self of mine. That concoction is not "me." It's no more than some gaudy probably even kooky piece of haberdashery I've decided I like because it makes me look (I believe) like, say, some kind of spiritual John Wayne. . . .

Get rid of all such folderol and nonsense, I am beginning to understand, and I do not have to fret over communication or the available vocabulary.

Surrendering myself totally, I *am* part of the reality which is God. As such, I require neither understanding nor interpretation. I am fulfilling that which an infinitely greater power has created me to be, a fact which neither I nor my self has to do anything about but to accept.

Freeing Your Being of Painful Self

FINDING OUT that the self is what gets in the way of the health and happiness of your spirit takes years enough and suffering enough and hard thought enough. You'd expect that arriving at this discovery would be the ultimate destination of each of us — the turning point, the freedom we have sought, the well-deserved reward. Instead, of course, we find it's actually only the beginning of a beginning.

Just staying at this level of understanding is difficult for me to do. To slip back into the old familiar comforts of self — to daydream about "winning out" over reality, for example — is too simple. My struggle just to abide for an hour by my newfound "wisdom" lets me know why Saint Paul recommends that we pray without ceasing. We have to.

But periods come to all of us when we are at our best, when we're strong enough to live by what we understand. And then, as some of you have let me know, there comes to mind the most terribly serious question of all. How, actually, do you go about freeing your being of that old faker and hypocrite, yourself?

This is to get down to the common ordinary nuts and bolts of the spiritual life.

My own experience is that it is easiest to rid myself of the self when it is at its most painful, when it feels like a crisis demanding immediate solution, when it smarts as fiercely as a thorn and my spirit goes into a tailspin that feels like a fall into endless nothingness, panics, depressions, thoughts that go round and round in my head until I am ready to die if only from the boredom of them, the relentless monotony of the self that will never stop talking about itself. . . .

This self of mine is apt to get so full of itself there is no room in my spirit, head, or heart for any being higher than it supposes it is.

How could there be? This self believes it is ruler of the whole world.

At this moment, moreover, when it is indulging in its wildest fantasies of supremacy, it is most destructive of the spirit . . . and most painful to me to bear.

Since there is none higher, there is no being to pray to . . . .

To solve this dilemma, I have learned, the wisest move for me to make is to the telephone. Telling someone else about my wretchedness begins to bring relief, slows down the circular thinking, is likely to pull the self down to a level of reality at which its delusions of grandeur cannot operate. Or, if nobody's phone answers (it being three o'clock in the morning), I can take down a book that I know and hold a mental conversation with it, a book being nothing but a person, to begin with — a fact I've realized, I think, ever since I was a child and a bookworm. With my friend Fyodor Dostoevski, or Joseph Conrad, or Colette, or the nameless author of the Book of Psalms, who incidentally knows more about human nature and human neuroses than any other author of my acquaintance, I begin to get back to reality, I begin to accept, I begin to suffer less. The moment is about to materialize when I can begin to pray.

What I am recommending is, first of all, to get out of yourself by getting in touch with another human being.

This has been one of my hardest lessons to learn. *Me* need anyone else? I do.

Maybe more than other people I need others.

But what difference? For others are after all God's reality. They are God talking to me, God helping me, God comforting me, God picking up the phone and answering even at this unheard-of hour of the night.

Unexpected Discoveries

ONE of the strangest aspects of the spiritual life is its way of functioning. It does not seem to be a process of step-by-step growth toward a goal, as I supposed, or of continuous development. For me it has been a series of leaps, all accomplished unconsciously within myself, of which every so often I suddenly become aware. "Well," I say to myself, "it looks as if this (or that) has been finally achieved. Isn't that amazing?" And then for another month or two or three or more I exist on the level of the plateau which has been vouchsafed me by the mysterious grace of God. And then again I discover that I have moved on to still another plateau. "Well, and now that has been accomplished also."

This never-ending growth, about which there is nothing spectacular except the results, being so secret and so miniscule that those on the other side of my skin doubtless cannot see it, would not take place, I am convinced, without there existing inside me a willingness for it to happen. Willingness appears to be the essential attitude. Nor would it be noticeable to me if my life had not been rearranged in recent years so that in addition to the willingness there is time in it for thinking, meditating, and praying. Without this highly simplified

(continued on page 26)

YOUR STILLNESS

Long past,
you heard strident
silences within Verdi's sealed
tomb, until, dissonance transmuted into
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring,
you heard your
Stillness.

Illumined
by Centered Sun,
you broke through barrier walls
of dark, wrote your living Ode to Joy, and
touched our shadow side of earth
with rays of healing
peace.

EMILY SARGENT COUNCILMAN

SUN-CROWNED MEN GROW ABOVE THEIR COMMUNITY

tall among the thickened cluster.
At Carmel on the wind beaten California
coast, the stubborn pines root in tough
cliffs, resist the twist of angered storm,
accept the gargoyled shapes the wind
makes of them. Flat canopied, they face
up to the sun, chorus acapella, shoulder in,
when a tree trying it alone, cracks, thunders
to the rocks in a dying cry louder than
the surf's.
Roars a glorious demise.
Destiny demands continued living. Bearing seed
we bend in compromise, welcome survival
as sacrifice, or fall in a shining moment.

NIXEON CIVILLE HANDY

PAUL GRIFFITH

IN THE QUAKER MEETING HOUSE, MAY 1, 1983

The rains have filled the reservoir.
And the rocks on the bottom and the smaller stones
and the charcoal layer are cleaning the new rains.

This house fills slowly as water enters small spaces.
The hard-backed benches are filling with people.
And the ushers are moving the guests into the rows

further into the empty window seats and the back pews
one by one. The late ones must climb into the balcony.
And this white shell with brown wood beams is full of life.

The dim light shelters us against the new, hot sun of May.
These walls are kind as the shell that holds the snail
moving to fill the hard places with itself.

The friend next to me is weeping. My arm moves around
her shoulder, and the man who has come with her
takes her hand in his. We are each weeping in our own way.

A man who knew the grief of such places is dead.
And all these friends have come to say he is not gone.
He fills me. Those are the words some speak out loud.

He fills us as water is in the reservoir and overflows
after heavy rains.

ELIZABETH ANNE SOCOLOW

transition

life to life
unfolding life
through transient dark
to light

E.S.C.

lifestyle, for which I always had a useless-seeming hankering, I not only would not be aware of interior change but, I honestly believe, it would not happen. For life lived as is common these days, in rushes of plans, nerves, worries, and long lists of obligations to be honored before the day is done, is hardly conducive to the spiritual life; it contains neither the quantity of attention required for it nor the necessary continuity of feeling or thought.

To live your life according to the importance of its elements (the cost of groceries, rent, and electricity as well as the number of hours you really and truly need to exist as a person of spirit, which has its steep prices too) becomes a necessity. It is a matter of making yourself available —to your deepest self — to your creativity — to God — in the same way you save Saturday nights for friends and Sunday dinner for family. For who, after all, is closer to you than your Father in Heaven?

Another discovery about these affairs (the so-called spiritual life is not at all complicated, is indeed almost unbelievably simple, although writing about it is always difficult) has to do with the surprisingly critical parts other human beings act in them. This I didn't anticipate. Indeed, when setting out on these novel adventures, I conceived of my relationship with the Almighty to be a strictly one-to-one deal. I remember writing of the qualms I suffered as I contemplated addressing myself to such a VIP (and I also remember, with gratitude, the letters written to me in slightly humorous though wholly sympathetic appreciation of the feeling). I didn't then foresee that my friends and acquaintances all would turn out to be as much the reality of God as anything else in this universe. I didn't then understand that there is "that of God" in each and every one of them, no matter how human, or that that holy part of them was going to speak to me in plain English. I didn't surmise (how could I?) that there was no need whatever for me to approach the red carpet before His throne with trepidation or to walk its awful length all by my lonesome. I didn't then dream that I would be able to see and recognize the spirit making its constant, amazingly persistent efforts to exist and grow and lead me. But I didn't perceive then how willing I was and had been, I believe, for an unpleasantly long time.

After Surrendering: Accepting

IT'S AS POSSIBLE for a schizophrenic to give up the wasp's nest of fear and delusion which he has clapped over his head as it is for an alcoholic to put down the bottle for good. The neurotic can set aside his anxieties and false convictions as if they were news-magazines of a bias to which he does not care to subscribe. . . . Such events are getting to be everyday matters in the

modern world. We are beginning to comprehend them to a degree from which we ourselves, having worked such apparently irrational changes within ourselves, are starting to urge others to achieve like surrenders and the peace that comes when suffering ends. The so-called "miracles" of the Bible keep on happening. And the indication is that they will become both more frequent and more widespread as the ancient concept of self-surrender comes to be understood and applied to themselves by men and women living today.

I have said it before, but I cannot say it too often: the most valuable feeling to the working of such a profound change evidently is willingness — is desire pitched to the extreme of a longing that must have its effect on the least cell in our anatomies, let alone our spirits. The willingness does not seem to have to be positive — *for or towards* something infinitely better than what we suffer. Willingness *to get rid of* — or *give up* — what is making us miserable is desire potent enough in many instances.

Perhaps I have not said it before, but I should have: the requisite of willingness is a person's honesty with his or her self. It is necessary really and truly to *know* what has to be given up. This is exceedingly difficult for most people, those anyway like myself who find it hard to see anything other than what they wish to see, who know only what they think, who think only what they hope, etc., etc., . . .

There is nothing sadder to watch — or, I might add, more tedious — than a person who is suffering, who is undeniably, consciously, even vocally downright miserable, who refuses to see what his or her suffering consists of, and who therefore is doomed to repeat these miseries from here on until the end. This is where the tedium enters in, for there is nothing more tiresome (even though we love them) than people who clutch their crises, disasters, and glooms to their bosoms and will obviously spend the rest of their lives that way — like flies inside purely imaginary traps. If that is what they want out of the one life they will ever live, we can, finally, only turn aside and let them live it in that excruciating way. Having crawled through a lot of my own days in this fashion, I am able to sympathize with their misery — and I am able, too, to perceive the egotism of their suffering. For that is actually what this suffering is: an arbitrary, almost unbelievable substitution of what we think/hope/desire in the place of the reality with which God makes us a present every hour of the day and night. This egotism, incidentally, must be the source of the tedium we feel while watching helplessly over our fellow-sufferers: the human imagination is so limited and repetitious as compared to the kaleidoscopic razzle-dazzle contained in the cornucopia of reality. . . .

I suppose, once again judging by my own experience, we concoct these boring little pipedreams of ours out of fear, lack of courage, lack of any trust whatever in God. . . .

Pipedreams, as you yourself may know, have a way of tripping us up, however. Substitutes do not satisfy. Finally the tedium of existing inside the imaginary glass bells of our neuroses gets to be one of the chief features of our ersatz existences. All these false-alarms and drummed-up crises, all these depressions in which we loll like sultans growing fat, all these desperations that

we sing over and over like the same cats on the same roof every night — all of them pall. I have a theory (not proved) that we always know exactly what's what, that for one perverse reason or another we choose suffering even while we glimpse the joy of the world, that we deliberately deny our knowledge of God's immense reality because we prefer the picayune but entirely controllable little universe that we have created in opposition. If this is so, it certainly gives us a taste of the meaninglessness of the dream as compared to all the rich full flavors of reality. Sometimes such meaninglessness becomes the painful source of a decision to surrender. We starve ourselves into submission, so to speak.

Once we have made the decision to give up, there is -- astonishingly, nothing to fret about, nothing to do. God fills the vacuum left where our egotism festered and scabbed. He directs. He measures out to us our days and nights, tribulations and triumphs, joys and deaths. There is nothing to be afraid of let alone to worry about — nothing at all. The sensation of His support is an actual physical one as well as emotional and spiritual. The really and truly amazing thing about it is that it is reality and all we have to do to obtain it is to accept it.

The Joy of the World

JOY is no longer a word commonly used on either side of Christmas Day. When it is used, it's usually in connection with a wedding, a big success, or an unexpected windfall such as winning the lottery. We have all seen it on television — the exultation of someone over something scarcely hoped for. We are likely to snicker at the feeling expressed and relegate it to the fortunes of people different from ourselves. Joy does not seem to be among our expectations nowadays.

We use it for people in love, believing it's what they must be feeling even though as we congratulate them and wish them the best, we probably feel very little other than a touch of nostalgia. And we use it while we congratulate the winners although we probably feel nothing toward them really except that we could be winners, too, if we had cared that much, worked that hard, and happened to be struck by lightning also . . . . And I wonder just how much joy we experience on Christmas Day, when we expect to entertain such a novel feeling, and how much it is some other human experience — pleasure in reunion with loved ones, pleasure in the festivities of the day, pleasure in remembering pleasures long past. . . .

My own experience of joy is that it is not just pleasure. If it were, the most important events of our lives would be parties . . . . For me it is something quiet, unlike most pleasures, something that has very little in it of the ex-

uberant, let alone of the triumphant, which is another matter entirely. To me it resembles nothing so much as a steadily burning jet of flame — a jet of meaningfulness and awareness of meaningfulness and contentment in that meaningfulness. It burns throughout the most routine days. It's like a cat's day-long purr. Also, it resembles energy, mysteriously potent. Equipped with it, I am able to accomplish many jobs that look too difficult or tiresome to be done, I can cope with people also difficult, I am able to endure disquietudes and discomforts with long-suffering cheer that is not my native disposition . . . . I enjoyed this sense of joy when I was a boy, lost it with the onset of what we call adulthood, and have recovered it only recently. Looking at it with fresh eyes, I am able to see it clearly and gratefully. It cannot be created by us and our wills and desires. It is a gift to us. It is, I feel certain, the presence of God.

God bestows it on us when and as it suits rather than when we suppose we need or deserve it. It is a feeling, all but indescribable, that allows me to celebrate the complex reality of creation. It is a feeling that Jesus celebrated more than anyone else born on this earth. It is the Christmas present given us every day of the year once we have put aside our embattled egos and wills and gone back to the confident patience of our childhood.

Assurances

SINCE the beginnings of my conscious spiritual life happened to coincide with these editorial duties, I have probably written more personally in these pages than most editors would — because what I had to say *ex officio* was, literally, what I would have confided in a letter. As you know, moreover, I believe that we understand each other to the degree that we are able to identify with each other, and this obligated me, accordingly, to picture myself in sufficient detail and candor so that, hopefully, the process of identification might occur. Thus by this time you probably can tell me things about my spiritual life (some of you have) that I am only beginning to comprehend. Let me, nevertheless, note a few changes . . . .

Probably because most of us are raised in good homes with the rites and certainties of faith being inculcated into us as religiously as oatmeal, I believe we are inclined — I am, anyway — to expect the spiritual life to be a passive one, something to be administered to us by professionals like medicine or algebra and other essentials of this world. My experience, though, has been just the opposite. For me the spiritual life has involved me in two highly active stages of being — first, the willingness to let myself get well and be healed, and, second, the constant search for contact with God, that power infinitely greater than myself that I don't understand, so that my recovery from confu-

sion and embranglement can be acccomplished by the grace of this power and I can start to rest in the uniquely marvelous sensation of being sustained that invariably follows.

Another — and to me wonderfully valuable — change has been the knowledge that I am never going to lose contact with this power: I couldn't. I possess and cherish this knowledge even when I touch bottom in despair nowadays, I count on and trust its existence, I hope and pray and await its return — and it returns. This is a boon and a bliss I did not enjoy when I was younger, when everything was will and battle and determination.

And still another change has been my discovery of the part others play in God's lovingness and wish to sustain and care for me. I see what the Quakers call 'that of God' in all my fellows on this earth. How could I have been blind to it for so long? No matter. It's in their company and friendship — not alone at all, and not a bit afraid at last — that I do my worshipping now.

Opening Up and Staying Open

THE HARDEST THING for me to learn was the importance — no, the necessity — of opening up and staying open. Everything in my life, which was no different than anyone else's except in its details, seems to have conspired to fill me with a stubborn conviction that the worst shame and final disintegration of a man's life would be to let the world see what that life was like. For the sake of that world I spent the major part of my energies in the attempt to appear happy, successful, optimistic, in charge and on top if it, without a care or a qualm or even a debt. This, according to my upbringing, was only a matter of common decency, or self-respect — of, in short, that inner core of self-will and ego which is not only countenanced by but promoted by the rules of our society. Nice people, which is to say all of us egotists, did not let the truth of our lives intrude on the lives of others, who were engaged in efforts to erect and then maintain to the death similar deceptions. . . . The result of such a struggle (which it really and truly was) was an isolation from my fellow beings and myself that often terrified me. Often I felt I literally could not endure such loneliness. Nevertheless, I still refused to tell the truth. And the consequence was that I came finally to regard myself as such a monster of hypocrisy that insults and contempt began to seem all I deserved.

The day arrived when I was no longer able to tolerate such an existence. I could not go on. And it was at this point, the very bottom of my life, that I found the strength and the faith in my strengthless and faithless being to ask for help. . . to let my desperation show. . . and my misery and loneliness. I ask myself where such last-ditch capability was found, and I don't know, I wonder

at it, for I have known a good many people superior to me in many ways who never found it anywhere. Wherever it came from, a willingness inculcated in me when I was a child, or (as I now believe) the constant presence of God, the act of asking worked a miracle. It was the turning point. And what it amounted to, actually, was my opening up to the real world built by God. It was the beginning of a new life.

People say, "Why, you are a changed man!" And that is true. But only I can see that the change is not so much a transformation but a rearrangement of the parts of the self. The change is essentially in attitude. I am conscious that to maintain that attitude I am going to have to keep myself open, I am going to have to make sure that I don't slip back into self-centeredness and self-will. The moment I do, isolation starts to creep back . . . as well as the old fears and intimations of loneliness, my former lack of trust in anything but myself. It is here that I do my most ardent praying . . . and here that I find myself accompanied and supported.

Congratulations

ELSEWHERE in this issue, due attention is paid to the Fellowship's twenty-fifth anniversary. Let me contribute my personal note of congratulations.

Although the Fellowship has its share of contrary beings, impatient poetesses, arbitrary article-writers, and sorrowing subscribers who have neglected to send us their new addresses, I am struck by the extent to which this quarter-century has seen the creation of many individual spirits joining together in a sincere search for contact with God by means of prayer.

I marvel at the many levels on which this search has been conducted — from the jingly and simplistic to the most abstruse and poetic. I marvel at and appreciate the ability of members to read and understand and value all searches on any level.

Of course, this was precisely what Mr. Evans had in mind and at heart when he founded the Fellowship.

I believe it has turned out to be what he must have hoped it might me.

If, as he wished, general understanding of the myriad faiths of the world has widened and deepened, the diversity of individual searches has grown just as remarkably: the most casual leafing through the pages of this or any relatively recent issue displays a fascinating conglomeration of unique persons, many of them possessed of abilities to express themselves as extraordinary as their thoughts and feelings, their wisdom and experience and strength.

I believe we have managed to be a real fellowship.

We have managed because of our commitments to God, ourselves, and each other.

The list of those who created the Fellowship out of their minds and spirits is much too long to set down here. I deem it only just, though, to congratulate Kathryn Brown for having sat at the center of us, keeping the lines open, for twenty-five years.

Recipe for the Simple Life

HAVING JUST come back from Nantucket, with my eyes focused for either the long-swelling green waves of both the sea and the moors or for the closeness of morning fog or the distance and dimness of the sort that falls by moonlight, and my nervous system at rest as a result of the heat of the sun cooled by constant winds from the southwest, and all my senses restored to the delicate scents of broom, wild roses, and the honeysuckle night itself and to the sturdy day-long singing of birds, I am interested for my own sake in preserving what I can of the simple life I have been leading. I am conscious that this life is the way to exist in which my being can appreciate best and most conscientiously what is essential and what is not.

Coming home, I am startled by the moil and confusion in the air over Long Island, by the pollution that stings my eyes the instant I step off the plane, and, above all, by the noise — Muzak, and traffic, and radio and TV and, when I reach home, the telephone. Add the visual counterparts of such distractions — the moving montage of lights on turnpikes, the sights to be beheld on TV, the photographs in magazines and newspapers. Add the countless messages being sent to us by one media or another. And the result is a concatenation in which the simple life does not exist at all except by the most steadfast effort and desire.

I have learned (all over again, which is my way) that to get back to the simple life I have to exert myself; and I do. . . . When I look closely at these efforts I notice how much they resemble a closing-up of the self, self-concern, and withdrawal. They aren't what they look like. For such things cannot be part of the simple life. Founded in anger, despair, or irritation, or a desire for reparation or retaliation, they only perpetuate and increase the pain of complexity and connection. Their exact opposites — patience rather than irritation, lovingness rather than anger, faith rather than despair — are the fundamental ingredients of the simple life. With them, I have learned, it is possible to sit down in the very eye of the hurricane, with the world blowing apart both above and around your head and even under your feet, and to stay there in perfect confidence that you are being sustained, that all really is well despite what it looks like outside . . . .

The creation of this everlasting shelter is not ours. It is a gift that is available if we want it. Wanting it is the one action open to us. And if we do want it, everything else that interrupts begins to fall away. The only problem, I would say from experience, is to want it enough. . . . Our reasons for wanting it are easily come by, for they are all human reasons. Plain weariness is enough. Or longing for creativeness within ourselves. Or the realization that only in such a safe place can we find that consciousness of connection with eternity which is our lifelong goal.

Depression and Spiritual Emptiness

OUR ability to pull the wool over our own eyes is astounding. It is one of the more complicated capers of the human mind — to keep us seeing only what we want to see instead of what is.

I have more perhaps than my share of vanities, and one of the vainest of them has always been my belief that I was honest with myself — that at least I did not try to fool myself about myself the way I saw friends and relations constantly doing. I felt that though I had the normal human capacity to delude myself about my hopes and dreams, my ship coming in, and other matters set in the future, I had a superior honesty when it came to the present and the past. . . . Among the things I felt sure of about myself was that I never, absolutely never, suffered from depression.

This, I only recently discovered, is a lie. I can remember my late teens, when attacks of depression laid me low as effectively as the most virulent infection and usually for longer periods of recuperation. Now that I remember the truth, I remember the anguish of it, above all, the terrible sense that it was never going to lift. (According to doctors, even the most terrible depressions always end.) It was so painful, so annihilating of what little security and poise I possessed at that age, that I obviously made up my mind never to suffer it again. And I didn't. My mind instantly developed a technique of burying depression so deeply within that I could not perceive its presence inside of me for thirty-some years.

Recently, when by some mysterious change of personality these mind-forged scales began to fall away from my eyes, my depression became visible to me. I could see it like an iceberg showing not even a tip on the surface of consciousness but floating there as ominously as a monster of the deep. I not only see it there, I realize it has always been there, threatening me every day and night of my life when I supposed I was such a secure if not jaunty man.

What do I do about it? At my age, I understand the futility of analyzing

my depression. What caused it long ago or what perpetuates it now makes little or no difference. All I really need to know about it is that I don't want it. I have taught myself to speak of it and its bad effects on me to friends, thus reducing its power over me and also reassuring myself that to a surprising degree this devastation is not uniquely mine. These friends have also given me lessons in turning it over to God. "Let go of it," they say. "Give it up." I do so, with all my heart . . . and it is taken away.

After such crises, emptiness sometimes descends on me like dust from a volcano, burying me in a state of petrifaction in which I believe I will never again be able to partake of the joys and functions of life. This, too, I let go of, I give up. And it is taken away. This is the saving operation of something deeper in me than mind, call it what you will.

Understanding

OUR relationships with others are of such importance to us that often we treat them as the most fundamental elements of our existence — which, after our relationship with whatever higher power we acknowledge, they very well may be. Or seem to be.

When I was young with skin as thin as anyone's I ever met, I approached others with such fear and trembling that after a few experiences I was inclined to give up the whole process of relationship and go and find a hillside where I could dwell by myself. As I grew older, my hide toughened. My tendency to be afraid was replaced by the expectation of very little or nothing from others, which in addition to keeping me safe from further disappointment was, I thought, very wise of me, very very shrewd. The selected few who passed my exorbitant standards and were admitted to my affection and esteem were, for me, figures out of mythology, heroes and heroines, nothing less, who naturally in the long run always turned out to be merely human, only clay or worse. Realizing the hopelessness of such a course, I finally located the one perfect person on earth and married her. And from that perch and exclusiveness and joint egotism, I succeeded in looking down on the world for years to come.

When this one relationship fell apart, I found myself entirely alone again. This time, however, being in my middle age, without the illusions or hopes of even the most superior youth, no solution was at hand. For the first time I floundered and suffered pain. I almost did myself in. But finally, knowing nothing else to do, and turning in the only direction I had not yet tried, I set aside pride and egotism and asked God for help.

Thus, without realizing what I was doing, I did what was necessary — what was essential — to the beginning of a relationship with God. Before,

although I had attended services and uttered a prayer now and then, I was so encumbered with self that a genuine relationship would not have been possible.

When I received help in answer to my prayer, it came via so many people, people I neither did not know before nor, frankly, would have cared to know, that my eyes were opened. In the novel state of humility created by desperation, I was open not only to communication with higher powers but to friendships and kindnesses and courtesies which, in retrospect, I see as His will also despite the human agency by which they were delivered to me. I was treated with such understanding that gradually I began to trust where I always doubted, and to have faith where I had previously always known I would have to act or else. . . .

This revelation — and it was that — amounted to a revolution in my life: in my thinking, in my feeling, in my behavior, in my very hopes and very dreams. It could not have happened without the understanding given me by others. It could not be continuing if, while receiving this understanding, I was not slowly learning to give it to others myself. I have the joy of it, and although I keep on meeting up with misunderstanding from some others, I am confident that eventually such a thing can be erased entirely.

Our Willingness and Unwillingness

IT ISN'T THE TEACHINGS on which we were brought up but our faulty misunderstandings and misinterpretations of them that we are obliged to recover from if we are to get well.

A lifelong fault of mine has been to apply too literally many of the precepts which were handed me as a boy to try to live up to. The great American virtue of self-reliance, for instance, I took to mean that it was desirable to live at a distance from the lives of others, and I practiced this so relentlessly that I ended up reeling in loneliness and in panic at my inability to connect. My practice of this old-fashioned virtue, in other words, turned it into a shortcoming.

I do not believe this was entirely all my own misdoing. The times change. The virtue that Emerson proclaimed and that was surely right and appropriate for the inhabitants of a vast and empty continent became a hundred and some years later a hindrance — a neurosis — to people like myself trying to live in what had become a small-seeming land overcrowded with others and with communications from others without letup. Not that self-reliance is not a virtue still. It is. But there are others more necesasary and more useful. For instance: the virtues I have had to teach myself have been openness to others, acceptance of others, love for others. . . .

To teach yourself a few new virtues is a difficult task. If you are like me,

you do not attempt so much as a stab at it unless the necessity of it is extreme — unless the lack of such virtues has grown literally painful. Lucky are the ones who suffer pains of this sort, for they, in discovering within themselves a willingness to change, are the ones who find the joy of giving up their unwillingness and the discomfort it was producing.

When I examine the unwillingness that I can still sense within myself and that I know very well I am going to have to rid myself of sooner or later, I can see how it has entrenched itself within me by attaching itself like some super-subtle disease (which is what it really is) to the shortcomings of my nature: in my case, mostly to the ego. When I think of giving up such and such a trait, something unwilling rebels inside of me and exclaims, "Why, you can't get rid of *that*! That is you! The *real you*!"

There is one hope for me, however. This is the incontrovertible fact that the pangs will eventually grow so bad that I will finally admit to God that, with some help, I would really like to make a change. This seems to be the all-too-human process by which in our strangely unwilling way we learn to be willing.

Egotism

IN A CERTAIN MOOD I am inclined to think that enlightened egotism is the best we can hope for from ourselves and our fellows. Not because it is ideal. But because, egotism being what it is, ineradicable except by bona fide saints, there appears to be no other real possibility. I can think of no one more egotistical than the people who suppose that they have rid themselves of it.

We are raised to be egotists. It is what our society says is right, and so my mother's household revolved around me and my brother, his did around his children, and so doubtless would mine if I had had any. What wonder, therefore, that when we grow up — I should say, when we grow older — we are apt to think we are the center of the universe, that without us it would not exist, and that everything that happens in it does so because it is our desire that it happen. From this point of view, we proceed, most of us, to set forth on a lifelong quest to maintain this notion, do or die — to keep the flag of self aloft.

It has been my experience that we are willing to go to any lengths to protect this idea of our preeminence. In making this desperate effort we miss the reality of life, spirit, and God. The majority of us find them only when by some literally fortunate stroke of disaster we are forced to surrender our egotism. Some people I have known, many of them specially intelligent and gifted, have preferred to do away with themselves rather than with their idea of their unique importance.

The grown-up — that is to say, those who have grown wiser as well as older — maintain their equilibrium, I have observed, by divesting themselves

of self-concern as it rises in them. Self-concern must be part of our very biology and chemistry, for, relax an instant, and there it is: back. My impression is that grown-ups fight their egotism for the sake not of being virtuous but of being comfortable. They know that it is their fixation upon themselves that causes their worst and most chronic miseries. For example, what more than anything else makes me egotistical? Being uncomfortable. When I am that, I become a fanatic in my knowledge of what matters and what doesn't, what is important and what is not. . . .

In my own struggle with egotism — which it would be egotistical of me to regard as much much worse than yours — I have found one reliable source of help. And this is the immeasurable superiority of reality as it is by comparison to what I would wish it to be. The marvels of fate and fortune, let alone those of birth and death, are far beyond my meager powers of invention. If I open myself to such richness of experience, I find I forget all about myself. And this seems to be the best possible solution of all.

Why Shortcomings Are Not Unimportant

ONE OF THE LARGEST surprises of my life was to discover that it was not with my capacities but with my faults and defaults that other people identified. I saw that we human beings are bound together by our knowledge of ourselves. Are you — in the privacy of your soul — like me? Really and truly? If so, I see that you and I are both frail and untrustworthy little boats on the same awesomely huge sea. If I let you see that I am the same as you, then you make the similar discovery about me. In our mutual guilt, we are able to understand and forgive each other. Whereupon, as friends, we can begin to work at being something better than what we are, encouraging each other and getting hope out of each other's changes for the better.

When I was young — having been raised in a climate that promoted psychology, believing that we were all what we were as a result of our childhoods, our mothers, our fathers, our sibling rivals — I sought help from the purveyors of this modern faith, and more often than not got it. This help usually was supplied in the form of admonitions to face what I was, adjust to it, and be happy to the extent that a prepossessed entity such as myself ever could. The great problem connected with this was my inability to do sufficient adjusting. Something that could not be analyzed out of me stubbornly went in knowing that a lot of what I was could hardly be regarded as right or tenable or even endurable. . . . Not until I reached middle age did I discover that the way for me was not to adjust but to attempt to change what I was.

I discovered indeed that solace and even some comfort existed in the struggle to change and that only by making such a struggle persistently could I

begin to acquire that freedom from self that I realized was desirable. The effort had to be not just daily but almost hourly, sometimes moment to moment. . . . After doing some struggling, I began to achieve periods of freedom. I called them after the feeling they gave me, "stillness," although now, some years later, "stillness" does not strike me as being an active enough word to convey the spiritual ferment and vitality involved.

Call them what you like, these periods (of meditation, really) prepared me to take my first approaches toward the act of prayer. I reported some of these approaches — nervous and confused — in these pages at the time. . . . What I can see now about these highly tentative beginnings was that they were possible because I had made a genuine effort to change and rid myself of my shortcomings. That, I see, was the necessary first step. That, I see, is the necessary continuing step to be taken every day of my life. It is not just a clearing of the mind, a getting ready, a waiting. It is an invitation to — a signal to — the better things.

Prayer, Reality, and Wishful Thinking

A SENSE OF SUPPORT is what we are given in return for being able to say "Not my will but thine, O Lord." It is a sense of things being in their proper place, of the world's running as it is supposed to — of, in short, the reality of life, of dawn, of the coming of night, of what people are really like and what they do or say. It is also for me a sense that even if the unexpected happens I will be able to deal with it. Essentially it seems to be a sense of my being the child of the Lord and therefore safe. It is a feeling I lost with my childhood and thereafter searched for in all the ways approved by modern experience and was of course unable to relocate until I was willing to agree to become a child once again. A child in my surrender to the reality which I call God, that is. Not at all a child in what I have learned and felt. Anything but a child in the knowledge of reality. . . . The strange thing is that this reality, of which I used to be so afraid, which I used to go out of my way to escape, which I would deny with every ounce of brain power I possessed, is now the very element which I trust. I trust it because I have had time to look at it and to realize it has very little that is threatening or dangerous in it other than the unreality in the minds of other people, their refusal to see it, and the substitutes they create for it whether these are the anxieties or depressions, fits of ego and grandiosity or fits of contempt for and manipulation of others for their own purposes. It is these unrealities — these crazinesses — which scare me. Yet I must not allow them to do so. I must see them for the results and dangers of other people's weak holds on reality. I must forgive them. I must not be afraid of their wishful thinking but pray that they will eventually perceive what's what and behave accordingly.

The End of Separateness

MY PARENTS' GENERATION, those who are now the elderly, were fortified by a faith in the value of individualism which produced countless successes of almost countless kinds.

Those of us who were raised in this same faith by them grew up however with increasing doubts about its ability to go on producing that sort of success ad infinitum. What it did to my life and the lives of my most esteemed contemporaries was to put us in positions intolerably isolated and alone. For us the old-American idea of rugged individualism seemed to stand in the way of reality — came to seem an embarrassing urge which we could neither give up nor brave out with confidence.

Now the younger generation of adults — that of our sons and daughters, nieces and nephews — has opened up a solution which we ourselves perhaps once thought and even dreamed of but never could, thanks to our upbringings, put into effect. This has been to set aside the formerly grand and grandiose ideal in order to exist cooperatively in the mutual strength and comfort of a community — a return in modern terms to the settlements along the frontier.

To me personally it is an attractive solution. Although I am obliged to suppress the ingrained impulse to place myself apart and (if possible) above my peers, to erect so to speak my own pedestal, I find it a highly tenable and comfortable position to be in. . . . In return for the surrender of my ego and the terrifying separateness that nowadays goes with it, I possess not enemies and rivals but friends, not constant anxiety and friction but warmth and good times, not desperation but sharing, not a desperate effort to maintain my idea of myself but a real life. By having taught myself to cooperate I find that instead of being alone I am involved. With such a feeling has come a sensation that is precious to me of belonging to God's creation.

Loneliness I

MORE THAN ONCE in her celebrated diaries the late Anais Nin speaks of the possibility of a man or a woman's literally dying of loneliness in this society of ours. I doubt if any of us can imagine a worse fate, for our ideal is popularity and being hail fellows well met and the happy interplay of rugged individualists, each of no superior or certainly no inferior worth to the other. Popularity is very important to us, and if we don't happen to be as hail as we'd like to be or as rugged, we are inclined to conceal the mortifying fact under a variety of guises of which the purpose is to fool not only others but ourselves. By such a process, intricate in a way that only human nature can make it, we

not only compound our inadequacies with feelings of shame and guilt but also — more disastrously — proceed to fortify ourselves inside our loneliness, thus, in our anxiety to make it seem impregnable, managing really to assure its being total. In these privately built castles of ourselves we do not (unless we can help it) ever refer to the terrors we feel while inhabiting them, nor to the icy wind of complete isolation that surrounds us. Instead of admitting such truths, we erect additional barricades and defenses, dig wider and deeper moats, hoist brighter flags of defiance, and regard ourselves as the champions of sacred things: our integrity, say, or duty, or the right or the truth or the intelligent or the good. The unutterable separation in which we live we are thus able to see as the price of something proportionately important and worth it.

Since it is out of the anguish of one kind or another of such loneliness that we begin looking beyond ourselves to ask of something or some power for help — since, in other words, pain is the source of all the growth we achieve — we must expect pain. Indeed, if it didn't hurt so much and weren't potentially so dangerous to us, it really seems as if we ought to go in quest of it. We cannot do that, however. All we are capable of is to endure what pain we receive and to take such consolation as we can find in the understanding that it is from these sufferings that we will start to grow.

Since it is loneliness that brings us into touch with a power higher than ourselves at last, and since it is this very loneliness that we lose, the loss of it being one of the clearest signs and greatest benefits of our growth, the sources of our loneliness seem well worth an investigation.

"Alone we come into the world," the old saying says, "and alone we go out of it." The notion of there being a trauma connected with our birth is familiar to us: our expulsion from that perfect amniotic garden in which we were created seems cause enough for us to suffer discomfort and loneliness for the rest of our born days. Insofar as we can tell, our exit from this world appears to be an equally lonely procedure. The famous painting by Gauguin bears the title (according to memory) of "Where Do We Come From? Why Are We Here? Whither Do We Go?" To some, the unanswerability of these universal questions is the chief reason for the universal loneliness.

Others regard loneliness as the inevitable concomitant of the complexity of which we humans consist at this stage of our evolution. Perhaps so.

My own experience of loneliness, though, began long before complexity set in. My memory is that I was around six or seven years old. My mother took me to a matinee of the movie made of Admiral Byrd's exploration of the South Pole. All I am now able to recall of the movie is an episode in which one of the sled-dogs fell sick, was unable to keep pace with the team, was therefore cut loose from the team and allowed to follow as well as it could across the Antarctic waste. It couldn't. So a member of the expedition was sent back to shoot it. I can still hear that shot. . . . The lonely death of that poor husky was something I identified with entirely. At that time, I had my mother to console me. Later, when I was endeavoring to cope with worse loneliness by far, I found no alleviation of my pain until — giving up, I dropped to my knees and uttered the single word: "Help!"

Loneliness II

THE ACCIDENTS of one life prove nothing as a general rule. But loneliness exists in our society (there are societies in which it doesn't) and as Anais Nin suggests it exists more extensively and at a more devastating level than most of us admit. Loneliness is so contrary to our ideal, it hints at the possibility of so many shortcomings within ourselves, that in my experience I have met up with very few individuals willing to mention it. For me personally this meant that when I happened to be at my loneliest I felt even lonelier because my case appeared to be unique.

A certain amount and a certain degree of loneliness are inescapable, however, to those who belong to our society. How can you avoid it physically, emotionally, or spiritually? As you leave home and go to college, you are bound to feel at least a moment of it. As you leave college and go to the big city to find a job, it is there. And it is there again when you quit your first job to move to another state to take a bigger and better job. And it is there yet again when you retire and sell your house and move to a retirement community. It is built into our highly mobile way of life in which everything is possible to us and all our life's struggles are finally crowned with a glowing sense of our specialness. Here, by the way, is another of our society's standard operating procedures which is highly productive of loneliness — namely, our precious all-important search for identity. Identity is what we break our backs for nowadays instead of money. It is our obsession. Those who succeed in our eyes are the ones who "have found themselves," while those who fail are the ones who "never found themselves." We pity them. And lest we do the same we consult psychiatrists and sign up for encounter groups. We think about it all the time.

"Who *am* I?" I remember desperately asking myself as I strolled through the deserted campus of the university I went to. I had no idea. I was terrified to have no idea. (This was one of my first real tastes of loneliness — which for me always has panic in it.) As it happened, a presidential election was coming up, the first in which I was to cast my vote. This proved to be the opportunity I was looking for. I went to the polls and cast my vote for Mr. Roosevelt, thereby taking a huge stride toward finding out who I was. I did not notice until later that it was a huge step toward separating myself from my family, who were Republican to a degree of passion that I did not dare to tell them what I'd done . . . or who I was turning out to be.

Instead of a discovery, though, it strikes me that my search for identity was actually a deliberate invention, step by step, of what I decided I would be. By hindsight I can see that it was often just a going-against what I had been brought up to be. Having no notion of who I was, I declared myself by at least knowing what I was not. . . . This method was very quickly my undoing, for it encouraged me in a lifelong yearning to be "different." (Such a yearning is hardly comprehensible nowadays when we are energetically doing our own thing.) And so I set out on a career of the most egocentric and most willful

assertion of self: and all for the sake of trying to learn what this self might be. It is now all too clear to me that ego is really nothing but the pain of not knowing what one is. Memory tells me that it was genuinely painful. And, above all, lonely. I used to attempt to alleviate the loneliness by reminding myself of the popular myth that it was the price that had to be paid for being special.

Although I daydreamed of being a special person, more often than not the specialness seemed to be freakiness. I felt as out of contact with others, as out of all hope of contact, as if I were Frankenstein's monster. This, inevitably, was when I began to patronize the psychiatrists, sitting for fifty minutes a day sometimes trying to discover what was wrong with me, why I was so alone. I could not understand it for (literally) the life of me.

Such alienation, feeding on itself and metastasizing, is obviously one cause of the terrible loneliness to be suffered in our society. It is terrible because we suffer it in the name of doing what we believe is expected of us. It is terrible to the degree that it sets us off from our fellow beings, that it separates us not only from them but from the lesser of God's creations, indeed from the earth and the weather and the seasons as they fall around us like the blossoms of flowering trees. It is terrible because we are so alone in it.

Loneliness III

THE PAIN OF KNOWING you are alone is often relieved by fantasies of being special or by other anodynes of distraction and escape which are essentially nothing but temporary painkillers.

Killing pain does not make a tolerable life. No matter if you use the most highminded forms of it, it doesn't work. I have more than one friend dying of overdoses of entertainment.

According to my own experience, everything but God's reality fails us, always loses its power to work the longed-for spell. By some law of the human spirit which I have not seen explicated anywhere, we seem to be obliged to live by that reality or pay a heavy penalty. Sooner or later we make up our minds to do this, not because we are so virtuous and fine, but because we are smart enough to see that if we fail to do so, we do it at our own peril.

Everyone to their own taste. I put off the making of this crucial decision in my own way. You used your own way. One of the most frightening of all ways, partly because it is so popular and can be chosen with so much acclaim, partly because I have seen it wreak such damage, is to conform — that is, to give up one's individuality and the search for identity for the satisfactions of believing we're just like everybody else: no better and no worse but (really) the salt of the earth. In the choosing of such a position, we have the appearance of

setting aside all claims to ego, self, and specialness; we make ourselves seem okay. In return we enjoy the security of being one of a crowd: not alone.

The difficulties that go with belonging to a crowd have kept me out of them — at least since my younger days. It is not easy to surrender our minds and feelings and inmost beliefs to a group. A group — except in the rarest instances — is always a tyranny, with all deviations and infractions not only immediately reported but punished. In other words, membership in a group requires certain talents. Lacking all of these, I found that a group invariably made me feel lonelier and more of an outcast than ever.

It is possible for me to view groups therefore only from the outside, only as one who has been occasionally the victim of them and often the witness to the terrible things they have done to others. The most terrible things were always done in the name of the group, all of them the most respectable, for personal purposes unknown even to those who did the terrible things. Crimes committed in the name of some precious truth are committed with a relish (call it righteousness) that is not available to the mugger, the burglar, or the murderer. . . . These are the really scarey people in the world. I do not know how to deal with them except to keep away from them. Their capacity to not know strikes me as dishonesty bordering on insanity. Since for all their wickedness they are still human, I can only guess that in some part of themselves they do know that they are doing wicked things with wicked glee and therefore must suffer a lonelier loneliness than most of us have had to face.

Although these monstrously sick people make reality monstrous, there is no hope of changing them. Keep away as I do. They do not know the penalty they are paying.

The fundamental life of each of us who does not try to escape is something much better. It seems to be a struggle with ourselves to accept the reality of our own particular lives. Each is unique. And the paradoxical thing about this solitary effort is that, once all escapes, evasions, and anodynes have been tried and found wanting and given up, we find in it the only release there is from our loneliness.

It is as if the root-cause of our loneliness all along had been nothing but our separation from God.

Ending Our Loneliness

I DO NOT THINK it's humanly possible for us to make a decision in our heads to put an end to our loneliness and thereby to do so. Exertion of our will, though it seems to be the right way of accomplishing something, as well as

the way that is most comfortable for us, being the way we were brought up to use and depend on for almost everything, does not work for loneliness or for many other difficulties in life. This baffles and bothers us, for the fact is that we imagine that our good brains and good intentions and determination to accomplish nothing but good will bring about the good ends that we set for our goals.

My experience has shown me, however, that my head is neither a safe place for me to dwell in nor even a reliable source of correct information about the life I lead. My head, indeed, is not trustworthy. This is so, I believe, because I have used it so assiduously and intelligently for my own purposes, seeing only what I wish to see, deducing only what I desire to deduce. The result is that it operates essentially as a Band-aid or Aladdin's Lamp, both quite useful to have at one's disposal, but scarcely the right equipment with which to think straight about anything. It does not function as it is meant to upon such crucial subjects as my loneliness because, as I hope I have shown in previous paragraphs, it itself is so responsible for the creation of that loneliness . . . .

I have realized that, all but impossible though it seems, the job I must accomplish is the restoration of my head to its original pristine sensitivity, to its direct functioning unprejudiced by fear or desire or any other feeling strong enough to change its chemistry and thus the very thoughts I think. Since my head is such a major part of me, doing this is a highly drastic action.

How can such a change — such a revolution in personality (which of course is what it amounts to) — be made?

Not, as I say, by thinking it into being. If that were possible, a lifetime's longing and need to be what I ought to be would have produced different results than there have been. Far different results.

Such vast changes are not made by most people, it seems, because they are not given the opportunity, perhaps because they need it less than I did . . . . Let me say right off that I am by no means suggesting that everyone go out and court crisis and personal disaster in order that such revolution can take place. For crisis and disaster of the most painful, even mortally dangerous sort appear to be the best if not the sole seedbeeds of revolution. I suspect this is so simply because only pain and terror are sufficiently disturbing to create the amount of adrenalin, despair, willingness, and courage to go to such extremes.

This fact, incidentally, must have something to do with so much of our art and literature being produced by pained and terrified individuals — viz., the late Jackson Pollock, the late John Berryman, or the late Sylvia Plath.

I am so convinced of the necessity of dire crisis to bring about spiritual awakening, however, that I sometimes catch myself lamenting the smooth sailing, high climbing, and good fortune of people who thereby are deprived of the means of making changes in themselves. Such a thought shocks me. It seems practically un-American. Naturally I do not utter it out loud. But I think it. And I believe it.

This creates a quandary for every human being. For who will go out and deliberately court crisis and disaster in order to save his soul?

Only those who have to.

Those who have to and can't — perhaps because of the terrible weight of fame, the world's expectations of them — are doomed to live crisis and disaster through to their tragic ends.

Through the wisdom of the Almighty, fortunately, crisis threatens most lives. Opportunity to change is provided most of us eventually, and when it does come we also have our chance to fall to our knees and find humility and out of that humility to ask for help. These are the requisite actions: surrender and the asking for help probably (if the rest of you are like me) for the first time ever. Help comes. And — with help — the self changes, our heads change, and so do our thoughts which imprisoned us, in solitary, for so long.

The Friendly Voice of Silence

FROM first grade on, I went on to well-thought-of private schools run by the Society of Friends in Philadelphia. First to West Philadelphia Friends, red brick, square, and plain, including its cement-paved iron-railed yard. Eventually to Friends' Central Country Day, in a former mansion in the Gothic style, where John Dewey's progressive education was practiced and attendance at Fourth Day (Wednesday) meeting was compulsory for students.

For meeting, a couple of hundred children sat on folding chairs set up in a semi-circle on the floor of the gym. Facing us from a plain-backed unupholstered bench were the headmaster and the guest for the day — often the famous Rufus Jones from nearby Haverford, occasionally some other Quaker celebrity, like Anna Cleghorn, the poetess, who, I recall, dressed like a country woman of the previous century, recited for us Edwin Markham's *Man with the Hoe.* No matter who the guest was, the spirit invariably moved him or her to rise from the bench and say something. To my childish mind, it would have been more exciting if every now and then the spirit failed to do its work.

It was essential that something be said if only to see the children through fifty minutes of silence. It was a perilously lengthy time to sit through without bursting into hysterical laughter, especially when, through the silence, Rufus Jones' pillow-shaped stomach gurgled and the headmaster's replied as in an operatic duet between bass and baritone.

When not in danger of disgracing myself with laughter, I found the silence of meeting decidedly pleasant. I liked it, looked forward to it, hated to have it end unless, of course, that all but overwhelming urge to laugh came over me again. No doubt the emotional tumult of life at home made me appreciate silence. I sat in it with a sensation of safety I could find nowhere else

except my bed when I was sick or, as often happened, I pretended to be. Surcease from tumult was one of my earliest needs. My classmates naturally did not share my appreciation of meeting. They deemed it the most trying hour of the week.

As I grew older, I began to lose these few sources of quiet. Constantly being taken to doctors in behalf of my sinus or my upset stomach or the fear of the dark I suffered up through the age of sixteen, I was no longer able to play the invalid and retire to bed for safety. Nor did the silence of meeting tranquilize me as it once did. Worried by the difficulties of getting along with a new stepfather and the prospect of going to college in the fall, my mind was too upset to enjoy silence.

In my final year at F.C.S., I was a leader of my class, depended upon in a way I had begun to resent, if not yet to rebel against, to do or say the right thing. As I left school on Tuesday afternoons, the headmaster frequently summoned me to the door of his car. "Tomorrow, Fourth Day," he would say, "we are going to have student meeting. We won't have a guest to speak. So I hope, my boy, the spirit will move thee — er — to say something!"

Which assignment (for that was how I interpreted his words) I carried out as dutifully as I did all my other duties. Next day, at meeting, forcing myself to wait for half an hour, growing more and more nervous at the prospect of getting to my feet, I would recite the words which I had written out and memorized the night before. No matter what I said, it pleased the headmaster, who shook my hand afterwards with Maine-woods heartiness. It also pleased the elderly members of the faculty. It did not sit well with my schoolmates, used as they were to my zeal to shine. That it meant nothing to me I don't believe I noticed.

After leaving school, I did not attend meeting again for thirty years. During that interval I experienced no silence other than the terrible inner one that accompanies the battle of the ego against the universe. When this venture ended, as it had to, in collapse, I happened to be befriended by an older man of the Quaker persuasion. It was at his kind invitation that I accompanied him one Sunday morning of an inordinately hot autumn to the Friends' meetinghouse in the suburban town where my crash had landed me.

Although I was starting to get well, I was not well yet, and as I followed my friend into the meetinghouse I was painfully conscious of the morning's heat, which I was afraid might cause me to do or say something offensive, and of the presence in the ancient handcarved pews of many people, who would be the ones witnessing whatever awful act my frayed nerves and despair might lead me to perpetrate.

What I particularly minded was the silence. Wholly unused to it by now, I was made so nervous by it that my fears turned into downright panic. It was also physically unbearable, compounded as it was that fall morning of the cries of birds in a nearby woods, of a reek as strong as ammonia of grass and leaves and sun with the rot of the meetinghouse in which I sat, said to be more than two centuries old.

Out of courtesy to the friend who was trying to help me, also out of a lifelong dread of making myself conspicuous, I sat where I was and steeled

myself. In order to hold myself in the pew I placed a hand on its rough-textured thin cushion and hung on . . . .

What happened to change a moment of panic into something else, I don't know. Maybe the memory of so many Friends' meetings attended so long ago, maybe a longing for serenity which my friend told me I could find if I wanted it enough. The silence of the meeting all of a sudden became a pleasure to me — a release from the noise of my life, my being, my mind, an inner feeling that was as delightful as a stroll into the woods outside.

While this was happening to me, someone arose and spoke — a short, stout woman with a plainness of dress I had not seen since the visit of Anna Cleghorn years back. I did not hear what the woman said. My attention was concentrated on the silence under her voice, under the bird songs, under the Atlantic swelling of the wind among the leaves of the treetops.

"I enjoyed it," I told my friend when the meeting ended with handshakes among everyone present. "I don't know what I liked about it, but I think it was the silence."

"Yes," he said, "Sometimes I enjoy the silence the way I do a snowfall in winter."

When he phoned at the end of the week to invite me to meeting again, he pointedly asked me to accompany him for the sake of the silence I had enjoyed so much. "Silence is the prerequisite," he said. "The first thing you must find is silence."

Some time later, when the weather was getting on toward winter, my friend and I were attending meeting together every First Day. One morning, as a fire flamed back of a handsome eighteenth-century glass screen, I looked for the silence underneath the explosions of the fire. (Doors and windows of the meetinghouse were shut now, and the silence was obliged to define itself by means of interior noises: the scraping of a shoe across the time-smoothed floor, the rustle of thick, winter clothing.) By now I was adept at finding the silence wherever it was.

As I settled into it this morning, letting it fill my ears, mind, and being, I heard the words: "I'll never abandon you, no matter what you do."

The words were as audible as if they had been spoken to me by my friend. I glanced at him. Seated next to me in the pews, he was wholly caught up in his own experience of the silence, his eyes closed, his hand touching his own cheek like that of a person sound asleep.

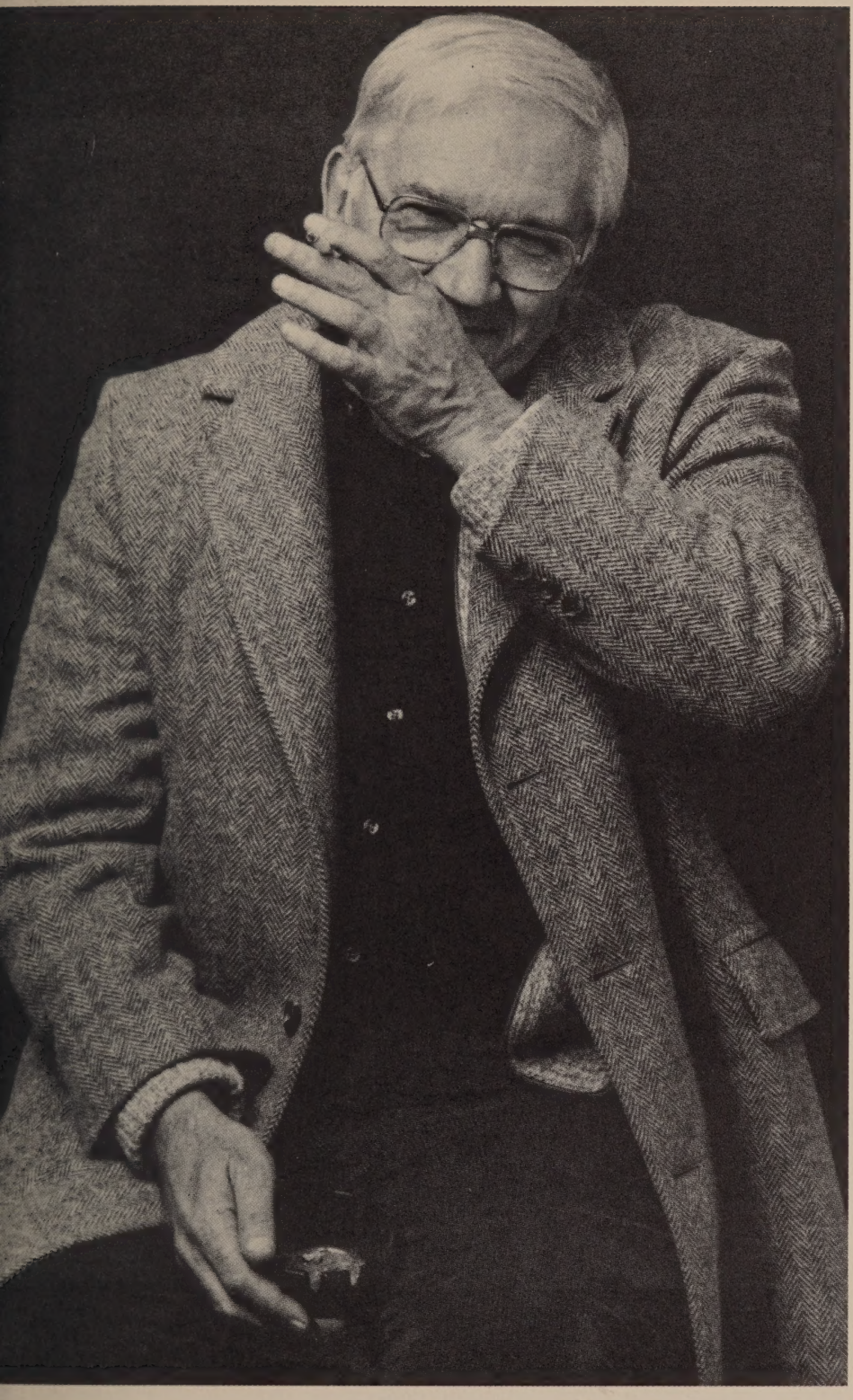
The meaning of the words I had heard so clearly was exactly that of my friend's behavior toward me ever since I asked him, months before, for help. It was exactly that of everyone he had since introduced me to — most of them members of this very meeting. It was the message I needed to hear if I was ever going to get well again. I had felt it before this morning, but this was the first time it had spoken to me so audibly.

Once I heard it, I learned to go and find, first the silence and then to wait for the voice. It comes *out* of the silence. It doesn't always *come*. But somehow I know it will again. And this knowledge has changed my existence. What I have to do, I now understand, is keep myself ready to hear it when it does.

Light

IN LIGHT from any source, man has immemorially recognized the perfect metaphor for a process which takes place within his own spirit. What is more beautiful than light? What provides a greater sense of safety? Of knowledge and perception? Of love? By what but a halo, the emanation of inner light, has man distinguished the holy and divine from the merely human? By what but festivals of light has he from the beginning been able to endure the darkest, briefest days of the year? Light is a theme appropriately occurring and recurring . . . . There is no end to the meanings of light.

The candle is not there to illuminate itself.



THE FELLOWSHIP'S FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This December issue of Fellowship in Prayer will be the last to be published in monthly form. Early next year, it will begin to appear every other month. New emphasis will be given to news, national and international, on prayer, to reports on the Fellowship's prayer program throughout the country, to short statements and sayings about spiritual reality, and the reviews of books and articles useful to persons concerned with prayer and meditation. There will be a regular editorial by the Executive Secretary.

A particular effort will be made to reach out personally to individuals and groups sharing the Fellowship's aims, wherever they may be. All friends of Fellowship in Prayer will receive the bimonthly publication gratis. Present subscribers will be reimbursed for the unexpired portion of their current subscriptions and kept on the mailing list. All friends are urged to write the Executive Secretary concerning their interests and activities.

The Trustees hope that the new program will increase the effectiveness of the Fellowship's work and reflect the excellence of our late editor Paul Griffith's vision.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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